

## Opinions of the Press.

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'To teach reading quickly and well requires the earnest co-operation of the pupils, and this can undoubtedly be best obtained by using books that are interesting to them. . . . It is not every story-book that will bear reading over a sufficient number of times for children to master its vocabulary, or that contains as much information as we may reasonably hope to convey while teaching reading, or such a variety of passages as to give sufficient exercise in the art of reading. The reprints before us are specially chosen as possessing these merits, and they appear to be well adapted to their purpose. They are standard popular works, and have all the advantages of being ably written, within the comprehension of children, interesting, and instructive, and well adapted to teach reading. Copies of these books should be in every school library; they will be read eagerly and with profit.'—*From the 'Schoolmaster.'*

'A fault of many reading-books is that they are unconnected and fragmentary. In the new Reading-books of Messrs. Bell & Sons this defect has been avoided, by presenting for the use of elder scholars and readers in parochial libraries such works as will fix attention, and not merely serve for the mechanical exercise of the faculties of sight and memory. The books are printed in good, legible type, on smooth paper, and are neatly bound.'—*From the 'City Press.'*

'These books are the realisation of a capital idea. . . . If non-literary children do not contract a taste for reading, and acquire facility therein, by the use of such charming narratives, we should give them up as *unteachable altogether*.'—*From the 'Educational Reporter.'*

'Now, as Her Majesty's Inspectors look in every elementary school for alternate sets of readers, we feel assured managers cannot do better than add some of the numbers of this excellent series to their stock. . . . We hope this series will rapidly find its way into many parochial libraries; literature of this kind—simple, interesting, and pure—if it only be widely scattered, may happily take the place of the cheap and unwholesome periodicals too often found in the hands of boys.'—*From 'Church Bells.'*

*Opinions of the Press—continued.*

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‘It was a happy idea to introduce these delightful guests [“Andersen’s Tales”] into the schoolroom. Imagination is one of the chief wants of the children who use these books, and is withal no insignificant sweetener and purifier of the mind.’—*Spectator*.

‘This is a good idea.’—*School Board Chronicle*.

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‘We are glad to notice that Messrs. George Bell & Sons excellent series of readers, consisting of shilling abridgments of standard works of English literature, suitable for boys and girls is growing, and in the direction we recommended in our October number. . . . Schoolmasters have now a large list of interesting and entertaining books *in standard English* to choose from, and we are glad to hear that they are availing themselves of the opportunity. Reading lessons have thus at last a chance of being made cheerful, and of being used to create and foster a real love for books and for good literature, while the language which they are written being of acknowledged classical quality teachers will be encouraged to take pains with the tone, a manner, and accent, in which it is uttered, and thus at length make their reading lessons in some measure *lessons in reading*. H. Inspectors of Schools, who are so unanimous in their complaint of unintelligent, ill-pronounced reading, should take this view of the matter into their consideration, and endeavour to get a trial for this plan somewhere under carefully watched condit. We can assure them from our experience that they are not likely to be disappointed in the results.’—*Journal of Education*.

‘Learning to read cannot but be in most cases a toilsome task; hence every attempt either to lighten the labour or render it repulsive, by sweetening it with pleasure, is a boon to both teacher and pupil. The series of which this volume forms part consist entirely of entertaining narratives, such as in subject-matter they are well suited to engage the attention of the young learner and make him eager to grapple with the difficulties of reading for the sake of gratifying his curiosity.’—*Athenaeum*.

*BELL'S READING BOOKS.*

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THE  
LIFE OF NELSON.

ROBERT SOUTHEY.

CONDENSED FOR USE IN SCHOOLS.

LONDON:  
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## P R E F A C E.

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It is hoped that the general suitability of this work, for the purpose to which it is now specially adapted, is hardly open to dispute. Simply as the narrative of a sailor's life, it must be read eagerly by any boy into whose hands it may have fallen for the first time: for it is a well-approved fact that there is no subject more attractive to English youth, than that which a poet has called 'our heritage 'the sea,' and all the incidents and dangers associated therewith. The popularity of Captain Marryat's writings, especially of those intended for young people, is a sufficient proof of this.

For a book which aims at instruction it is also well to have as a subject some individual whose history may serve, by its plain narration (without anything like lecturing, or the formal pointing of morals), to illustrate those qualities of mind and character which we desire to cultivate, and which must be found in any one who has earned the general love of his fellow-men, and — in the simple classic formula — 'deserved well of his country.'

In Nelson's life we find both these requirements. As the latest and the greatest of England's maritime heroes, his story has the first element of universal interest. And in his personal character, the love of truth and straight-forwardness, the indomitable courage and perseverance in the face of difficulties, and the thoughtfulness for others,—all which qualities

endeared him to those who served with him, and made him 'the darling of the nation,'—are not beyond imitation by any, however humble their pathway in life, or however different in its even tenor from the stirring times which give to his history a dramatic vividness and depth of interest found in few works of fiction.

That this history is recorded by the pen of one of England's greater writers is a further recommendation: and in this abridged edition care has been taken not to interfere improperly with his work. About one-third of the whole has, it is true, been omitted, but this consists of details of secondary interest, and certain passages which do not bear directly on Nelson's public career, and may be pronounced unsuitable for a book of this kind. But no *alterations* have been made; and though it may be considered that in some instances passages might have been paraphrased, with a view to simplicity of wording, it has been judged expedient to leave them unaltered, rather than impair the genuineness of a work of repute.

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# THE LIFE OF NELSON.

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## CHAPTER I.

HORATIO, son of Edmund and Catherine Nelson, was born September 29, 1758, in the parsonage-house of Burnham-Thorpe, a village in the county of Norfolk, of which his father was rector. The maiden name of his mother was Suckling: her grandmother was an elder sister of Sir Robert Walpole, and this child was named after his godfather, the first Lord Walpole. Mrs Nelson died in 1767, leaving eight out of eleven children. Her brother, Captain Maurice Suckling, of the navy, visited the widower upon this event, and promised to take care of one of the boys. Three years afterwards, when Horatio was only twelve years of age, being at home during the Christmas holidays, he read in the county newspaper that his uncle was appointed to the *Raisonneable*, of sixty-four guns. 'Do, William,' said he to a brother who was a year and a half older than himself, 'write to my father and tell him that I should like to go to sea with uncle Maurice.' Mr Nelson was then at Bath, whither he had gone for the recovery of his health: his circumstances were straitened, and he had no prospect of ever seeing them bettered: he knew that it was the wish of providing for himself by which Horatio was chiefly actuated; and did not oppose his resolution: he understood also the boy's character, and had always said, that in whatever station he might be placed, he would climb, if possible, to the very top of the tree. Accordingly Captain Suckling was written to. 'What,' said he in his answer, 'has poor Horatio done, who is so weak, that he, above all the rest, should be sent to rough it out

at sea?—But let him come, and the first time we go into action a cannon-ball may knock off his head, and provide for him at once.'

It is manifest from these words, that Horatio was not the boy whom his uncle would have chosen to bring up in his own profession. He was never of a strong body; and the ague, which at that time was one of the most common diseases in England, had greatly reduced his strength; yet he had already given proofs of that resolute heart and nobleness of mind, which, during his whole career of labour and of glory, so eminently distinguished him. When a mere child, he strayed a birds'-nesting from his grandmother's house in company with a cow-boy: the dinner-hour elapsed; he was absent, and could not be found; and the alarm of the family became very great, for they apprehended that he might have been carried off by gipsies. At length, after search had been made for him in various directions, he was discovered alone, sitting composedly by the side of a brook which he could not get over. 'I wonder, child,' said the old lady when she saw him, 'that hunger and fear did not drive you home.'—'Fear! grandmamma,' replied the future hero, 'I never saw fear:—What is it?' Once, after the winter holidays, when he and his brother William had set off on horseback to return to school, they came back because there had been a fall of snow; and William, who did not much like the journey, said it was too deep for them to venture on. 'If that be the case,' said the father, 'you certainly shall not go: but make another attempt, and I will leave it to your honour. If the road is dangerous, you may return: but remember, boys, I leave it to your honour.' The snow was deep enough to have afforded them a reasonable excuse: but Horatio was not to be prevailed upon to turn back. 'We must go on,' said he: 'remember, brother, it was left to our honour!'

Early on a cold and dark spring morning Mr Nelson's servant arrived at this school, at North Walsham, with the expected summons for Horatio to join his ship. The parting from his brother William, who had been for so many years his playmate and bed-fellow, was a painful effort, and was the beginning of those privations which are the sailor's lot through life. He accompanied his father to London. The *Raisonneable* was lying

in the Medway. He was put into the Chatham stage, and on its arrival was set down with the rest of the passengers, and left to find his way on board as he could. After wandering about in the cold without being able to reach the ship, an officer observed the forlorn appearance of the boy ; questioned him ; and, happening to be acquainted with his uncle, took him home, and gave him some refreshments. When he got on board, Captain Suckling was not in the ship, nor had any person been apprised of the boy's coming. He paced the deck the whole remainder of the day, without being noticed by any one ; and it was not till the second day that somebody, as he expressed it, 'took compassion on him.'

The *Raisonneable* was paid off soon, and Captain Suckling was removed to the *Triumph*, then stationed as a guardship in the Thames. This was considered as too inactive a station for a boy, and Nelson was therefore sent a voyage to the West Indies in a merchant-ship. He returned a practical seaman, but with a hatred of the king's service. His uncle received him on board the *Triumph* on his return ; and discovering his dislike to the navy, took the best means of reconciling him to it. He held it out as a reward, that if he attended well to his navigation he should go in the cutter and decked long-boat, which was attached to the commanding officer's ship at Chatham. Thus he became a good pilot for vessels of that description, from Chatham to the Tower, and down the Swin Channel to the North Foreland, and acquired a confidence among rocks and sands, of which he often felt the value.

Nelson had not been many months on board the *Triumph* when his love of enterprise was excited by hearing that two ships (the *Racehorse* and *Carcass*) were fitting out for a voyage of discovery toward the North Pole. In consequence of the difficulties which were expected on such a service, these vessels were to take out effective men instead of the usual number of boys. This, however, did not deter him from soliciting to be received, and by his uncle's interest he was admitted as coxswain under Captain Lutwidge, second in command.

They sailed from the Nore on the 4th of June : on the 6th of the following month they were in latitude  $79^{\circ} 56' 39''$  ; longitude,  $9^{\circ} 43' 30''$  E. The next day the *Racehorse* was beset with

ice ; but they hove her through with ice-anchors. Captain Phipps continued ranging along the ice northward and westward till the 24th ; he then tried to the eastward. On the 30th he was in latitude  $80^{\circ} 13'$ , longitude,  $18^{\circ} 48' E.$ , among the islands and in the ice, with no appearance of an opening for the ships. Here they were becalmed in a large bay, everywhere, as far as they could see, surrounded with ice. On the next day the ice closed upon them, and no opening was to be seen anywhere, except a hole, or lake, as it might be called, of about a mile and a half in circumference, where the ships lay. The men were playing on the ice all day ; but the Greenland pilots, who were further than they had ever been before, and considered that the season was far advancing, were alarmed at being thus beset.

The next day there was not the smallest opening, the ships were within less than two lengths of each other, separated by ice, and neither having room to turn. Young Nelson exposed himself in a daring manner. One night, during the mid-watch, he stole from the ship with one of his comrades, taking advantage of a rising fog, and set out over the ice in pursuit of a bear. It was not long before they were missed. The fog thickened, and Captain Lutwidge and his officers became exceedingly alarmed for their safety. Between three and four in the morning the weather cleared, and the two adventurers were seen, at a considerable distance from the ship, attacking a huge bear. The signal for them to return was immediately made : Nelson's comrade called upon him to obey it, but in vain ; his musket had flashed in the pan ; their ammunition was expended ; and a chasm in the ice, which divided him from the bear, probably preserved his life. Captain Lutwidge, seeing his danger, fired a gun, which had the desired effect of frightening the beast ; and the boy then returned, somewhat afraid of the consequences of his trespass. The captain reprimanded him sternly, and desired to know what motive he could have for hunting a bear. 'Sir,' said he, 'I wished to kill the bear, that I might carry the skin to my father.'

A party was now sent to an island, about twelve miles off (named Walden's Island in the chart, from the midshipman who was intrusted with this service), to see where the open water lay. They came back with information that the ice, though

close all about them, was open to the westward, round the point by which they came in. There was but one alternative, either to wait the event of the weather upon the ships, or to betake themselves to the boats.

On the 7th of August they began to haul the boats over the ice, Nelson having command of the four-oared cutter. The men behaved excellently well, like true British seamen: they seemed reconciled to the thought of leaving the ships, and had full confidence in their officers. About noon, the ice appeared rather more open near the vessels; and as the wind was easterly, though there was but little of it, the sails were set, and they got about a mile to the westward. The commander therefore resolved to carry on both attempts together, moving the boats constantly, and taking every opportunity of getting the ships through. A party was sent out next day to the westward, to examine the state of the ice: they returned with tidings that it was very heavy and close, consisting chiefly of large fields. The ships, however, moved, and the ice itself was drifting westward. There was a thick fog, so that it was impossible to ascertain what advantage had been gained. It continued on the 9th; but the ships were moved a little through some very small openings. In the course of the day they got past the boats, and took them on board again. On the morrow the wind sprang up to the N. N. E. All sail was set, and the ships forced their way through a great deal of very heavy ice. They frequently struck, and with such force, that one stroke broke the shank of the *Racehorse's* best bower anchor: but the vessels made way; and by noon they had cleared the ice, and were out at sea.

The ships were paid off shortly after their return to England; and Nelson was then placed by his uncle with Captain Farmer, in the *Seahorse*, of twenty guns, then going out to the East Indies in the squadron under Sir Edward Hughes. His good conduct attracted the attention of the master (afterwards Captain Surridge), in whose watch he was; and, upon his recommendation, the captain rated him as midshipman. At this time his countenance was florid, and his appearance rather stout and athletic: but when he had been about eighteen months in India he felt the effects of that climate, so perilous

to European constitutions. He was reduced almost to a skeleton ; the use of his limbs was for some time entirely lost ; and the only hope that remained was from a voyage home. Accordingly he was brought home by Captain Pigot, in the *Dolphin* ; and had it not been for the attentive and careful kindness of that officer on the way, Nelson would never have lived to reach his native shores. Long afterwards, when the name of Nelson was known as widely as that of England itself, he spoke of the feelings which he at this time endured. 'I felt impressed,' said he, 'with a feeling that I should never rise in my profession. My mind was staggered with a view of the difficulties I had to surmount, and the little interest I possessed. I could discover no means of reaching the object of my ambition. After a long and gloomy reverie, in which I almost wished myself overboard, a sudden glow of patriotism was kindled within me, and presented my king and country as my patron. "Well then," I exclaimed, "I will be a hero ! and, confiding in Providence, brave every danger !"

His interest, however, was far better than he imagined. During his absence Captain Suckling had been made Comptroller of the Navy ; his health had materially improved upon the voyage ; and, as soon as the *Dolphin* was paid off, he was appointed acting lieutenant in the *Worcester*, then going out with convoy to Gibraltar. Soon after his return, on the 8th of April, 1777, he passed his examination for a lieutenancy.

The next day Nelson received his commission as second lieutenant of the *Lowestoffe* frigate, Captain William Locker, then fitting out for Jamaica.

American and French privateers, under American colours, were at that time harassing our trade in the West Indies : even a frigate was not sufficiently active for Nelson, and he repeatedly got appointed to the command of one of the *Lowestoffe*'s tenders. During one of their cruises the *Lowestoffe* captured an American letter-of-marque : it was blowing a gale, and a heavy sea running. The first lieutenant being ordered to board the prize, went below to put on his hanger. It happened to be mislaid ; and, while he was seeking it, Captain Locker came on deck. Perceiving the boat still alongside, and in danger every moment of being swamped, and being extremely anxious that

the privateer should be instantly taken in charge, because he feared that it would otherwise founder, he exclaimed, 'Have I no officer in the ship who can board the prize?' Nelson did not offer himself immediately, waiting, with his usual sense of propriety, for the first lieutenant's return: but hearing the master volunteer, he jumped into the boat, saying, 'It is my turn now; and if I come back, it is yours.'

About this time he lost his uncle. Captain Locker, however, who had perceived the excellent qualities of Nelson, and formed a friendship for him, which continued during his life, recommended him warmly to Sir Peter Parker, then commander-in-chief upon that station. In consequence of this recommendation he was removed into the *Bristol* flag-ship. He soon became first lieutenant; and, on the 8th of December, 1778, was appointed commander of the *Badger* brig. While the *Badger* was lying in Montego Bay, Jamaica, the *Glasgow*, of twenty guns, came in and anchored there, and in two hours was in flames, the steward having set fire to her while stealing rum out of the after-hold. Her crew were leaping into the water, when Nelson came up in his boats, made them throw their powder overboard, and point their guns upward; and, by his presence of mind and personal exertions, prevented the loss of life which would otherwise have ensued. On the 11th of June, 1779, he was made post\* into the *Hinchinbrook*, of twenty-eight guns, an enemy's merchantman, sheathed with wood, which had been taken into the service.

Nelson was fortunate in possessing good interest: his promotion had been almost as rapid as it could be; and before he had attained the age of twenty-one, he had gained that rank which brought all the honours of the service within his reach. No opportunity, indeed, had yet been given him of distinguishing himself; but he was thoroughly master of his profession, and his zeal and ability were acknowledged wherever he was known. Count d'Estaing, with a fleet of one hundred and twenty-five sail, men-of-war and transports, and a reputed force of five-and-twenty thousand men, threatened Jamaica from St Domingo. Nelson offered his services to the Admiral and to Governor

\* That is, he became 'post-captain,' the highest officer in an ordinary ship of the line.—ED.

general Dalling, and was appointed to command the batteries of Fort Charles at Port Royal. Not more than seven thousand men could be mustered for the defence of the island,—a number wholly inadequate to resist the force which threatened them. D'Estaing, however, was either not aware of his own superiority, or not equal to the command with which he was intrusted : he attempted nothing with this formidable armament ; and General Dalling was thus left to execute a project which he had formed against the Spanish colonies.

This project was, to take Fort San Juan, on the river of that name, which flows from Lake Nicaragua into the Atlantic; make himself master of the lake itself, and of the cities of Grenada and Leon ; and thus cut off the communication of the Spaniards between their northern and southern possessions in America.

Early in the year 1780, five hundred men, destined for this service, were convoyed by Nelson from Port Royal to Cape Gracias a Dios, in Honduras. Not a native was to be seen when they landed : they had been taught that the English came with no other intent than that of enslaving them, and sending them to Jamaica. After a while, however, one of them ventured down, confiding in his knowledge of one of the party ; and by his means the neighbouring tribes were conciliated with presents, and brought in. The troops were encamped on a swampy and unwholesome plain, where they were joined by a party of the 79th Regiment, from Black River, who were already in a deplorable state of sickness. Having remained here a month, they proceeded, anchoring frequently, along the Mosquito shore to collect their Indian allies, who were to furnish proper boats for the river, and to accompany them. They reached the river San Juan March 24th : and here, according to his orders, Nelson's services were to terminate ; but not a man in the expedition had ever been up the river, or knew the distances of any fortification from its mouth : and he, not being one who would turn back when so much was to be done, resolved to carry the soldiers up. About two hundred, therefore, were embarked, and they began their voyage. It was the latter end of the dry season, the worst time for such an expedition ; the river was consequently low: Indians were sent forward through narrow

channels between shoals and banks, and the men were frequently obliged to quit the boats, and exert their utmost strength to drag or thrust them along.

On the 9th of April they reached an island in the river called San Bartolomeo, which the Spaniards had fortified, as an outpost, with a small semi-circular battery, manned with sixteen or eighteen men. It commanded the river in a rapid and difficult part of the navigation. Nelson, at the head of a few of his seamen, leaped upon the beach. The ground upon which he sprung was so muddy, that he had some difficulty in extricating himself, and lost his shoes: bare-footed, however, he advanced, and, in his own phrase, *boarded the battery*. In this resolute attempt he was bravely supported by the well-known Despard, at that time a captain in the army.

The castle of San Juan is thirty-two miles below the Lake of Nicaragua, from which the river issues, and sixty-nine from its mouth. The English appeared before it on the 11th, two days after they had taken San Bartolomeo. Nelson's advice was, that it should instantly be carried by assault: but Nelson was not the commander; and it was thought proper to observe all the formalities of a siege. Ten days were wasted before this could be commenced: it was a work more of fatigue than of danger; even the Indians sunk under it. The place surrendered on the 24th. But victory procured to the conquerors none of that relief which had been expected; the castle was worse than a prison. The huts, which served for hospitals, were surrounded with filth and with the putrefying hides of slaughtered cattle—almost sufficient of themselves to have engendered pestilence: and when, at last, orders were given to erect a convenient hospital, the contagion had become so general, that there were none who could work at it. Five months the English persisted in what may be called this war against nature; they then left a few men, who seemed proof against the climate, to retain the castle till the Spaniards should choose to retake it, and make them prisoners. The rest abandoned their baleful conquest. Eighteen hundred men were sent to different posts upon this wretched expedition: not more than three hundred and eighty ever returned. The *Hinchinbrook's* complement consisted of two hundred men; eighty-seven took to their beds in one night, and of the whole crew not more than ten survived.

Nelson himself was saved by a timely removal. In a few days after the commencement of the siege, he was seized with, the prevailing dysentery: meantime Captain Glover died, and Nelson was appointed to succeed him in the *Janus*, of forty-four guns. He returned to the harbour the day before San Juan surrendered, and immediately sailed for Jamaica in the sloop which brought the news of his appointment. He was, however, so greatly reduced by the disorder, that when they reached Port Royal he was carried ashore in his cot; and finding himself, after a partial amendment, unable to retain the command of his new ship, he was compelled to ask leave to return to England, as the only means of recovery. Captain (afterwards Admiral) Cornwallis took him home in the *Lion*; and to his care and kindness Nelson believed himself indebted for his life. In three months he recovered, and immediately hastened to London, and applied for employment. After an interval of about four months he was appointed to the *Albemarle*.

His health was not yet thoroughly re-established; and while he was employed in getting his ship ready, he again became so ill as hardly to be able to keep out of bed. Yet in this state, still suffering from the fatal effect of a West Indian climate, he was sent to the North Seas, and kept there the whole winter.

On his return to the Downs, while he was ashore visiting the senior officer, there came on so heavy a gale that almost all the vessels drove, and a store-ship came athwart-hawse of the *Albemarle*. Nelson feared she would drive on the Goodwin Sands: he ran to the beach; but even the Deal boatmen thought it impossible to get on board, such was the violence of the storm. At length some of the most intrepid offered to make the attempt for fifteen guineas: and, to the astonishment and fear of all the beholders, he embarked during the height of the tempest. With great difficulty and imminent danger he succeeded in reaching her. She lost her bowsprit and foremast, but escaped further injury. He was now ordered to Quebec.

During her first cruise on that station, the *Albemarle* captured a fishing schooner, which contained, in her cargo, nearly all the property that her master possessed, and the poor fellow had a large family at home, anxiously expecting him. Nelson employed him as a pilot in Boston Bay, then restored him the

schooner and cargo, and gave him a certificate to secure him against being captured by any other vessel. The man came afterwards to the *Albemarle*, at the hazard of his life, with a present of sheep, poultry, and fresh provisions. A most valuable supply it proved; for the scurvy was raging on board: this was in the middle of August, and the ship's company had not had a fresh meal since the beginning of April. The certificate was preserved at Boston in memory of an act of unusual generosity.

The *Albemarle* was under orders to convoy a fleet of transports to New York. 'A very pretty job,' said her captain, 'at this late season of the year' (October was far advanced), 'for our sails are at this moment frozen to the yards.' On his arrival at Sandy Hook, he waited on the commander-in-chief, Admiral Digby, who told him he was come on a fine station for making prize-money. 'Yes, sir,' Nelson made answer; 'but the West Indies is the station for honour.' Lord Hood, with a detachment of Rodney's victorious fleet, was at that time in Sandy Hook: he had been intimate with Captain Suckling; and Nelson, who was desirous of nothing but honour, requested him to ask for the *Albemarle*, that he might go to that station where it was most likely to be obtained. Admiral Digby reluctantly parted with him. His professional merit was already well known: and Lord Hood, on introducing him to Prince William Henry, as the Duke of Clarence was then called, told the prince, if he wished to ask any question respecting naval tactics, Captain Nelson could give him as much information as any officer in the fleet. The duke, who, to his own honour, became from that time the firm friend of Nelson, describes him as appearing the merest boy of a captain he had ever seen, dressed in a full-lace uniform, an old-fashioned waistcoat with long flaps, and his lank unpowdered hair tied in a stiff Hessian tail of extraordinary length; making altogether so remarkable a figure, 'that,' says the duke, 'I had never seen anything like it before, nor could I imagine who he was, nor what he came about. But his address and conversation were irresistibly pleasing; and when he spoke on professional subjects, it was with an enthusiasm that showed he was no common being.'

Tidings soon arrived that the preliminaries of peace had been

signed; and the *Albemarle* returned to England, and was paid off. Nelson's first business, after he got to London, even before he went to see his relations, was to attempt to get the wages due to his men, for the various ships in which they had served during the war. 'The disgust of seamen to the navy,' he said, 'was all owing to the infernal plan of turning them over from ship to ship; so that men could not be attached to the officers, nor the officers care the least about the men.' Yet he himself was so beloved by his men, that his whole ship's company offered, if he could get a ship, to enter for her immediately.

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## CHAPTER II.

'I HAVE closed the war,' said Nelson, in one of his letters, 'without a fortune; but there is not a speck in my character. True honour, I hope, predominates in my mind far above riches.'

In March he was appointed to the *Boreas*, twenty-eight guns, going to the Leeward Islands, as a cruiser, on the peace establishment. His ship was full of young midshipmen, of whom there were not less than thirty on board: and happy were they whose lot it was to be placed with such a captain. If he perceived that a boy was afraid at first going aloft, he would say to him, in a friendly manner: 'Well, sir, I am going a race to the mast-head, and beg that I may meet you there.' The poor little fellow instantly began to climb, and got up how he could,—Nelson never noticed in what manner, but, when they met in the top, spoke cheerfully to him; and would say, how much any person was to be pitied who fancied that getting up was either dangerous or difficult.

The Americans were at this time trading with our islands, taking advantage of the register of their ships, which had been issued while they were British subjects. Nelson knew that, by the Navigation Act, no foreigners, directly or indirectly, are permitted to carry on any trade with these possessions: he

knew, also, that the Americans had made themselves foreigners with regard to England ; they had broken the ties of blood and language, and acquired the independence which they had been provoked to claim, unhappily for themselves, before they were fit for it ; and he was resolved that they should derive no profit from those ties. In November, when the squadron, having arrived at Barbadoes, was to separate, with no other orders than those for examining anchorages, and the usual inquiries concerning wood and water, Nelson asked his friend Collingwood, then captain of the *Mediator*, whose opinion he knew upon the subject, to accompany him to the commander-in-chief, whom he then respectfully asked, whether they were not to attend to the commerce of the country, and see that the Navigation Act was respected—that appearing to him to be the intent of keeping men-of-war upon this station in time of peace ? Sir Richard Hughes replied, he had no particular orders, neither had the Admiralty sent him any acts of parliament. Upon this Nelson produced the statutes, read the words of the Act, and apparently convinced the commander-in-chief, that men-of war, as he said, ‘ were sent abroad for some other purpose than to be made a show of.’ Accordingly, orders were given to enforce the Navigation Act.

Collingwood, in the *Mediator*, and his brother, Winefred Collingwood, in the *Rattler*, actively co-operated with Nelson. The custom-houses were informed, that after a certain day all foreign vessels found in the ports would be seized ; and many were in consequence seized, and condemned in the Admiralty Court. When the *Boreas* arrived at Nevis, she found four American vessels deeply laden, and with what are called the island colours flying—white, with a red cross. They were ordered to hoist their proper flag, and depart within eight-and-forty hours ; but they refused to obey, denying that they were Americans. Some of their crews were then examined in Nelson’s cabin, where the judge of the Admiralty happened to be present. The case was plain ; they confessed that they were Americans, and that the ships, hull and cargo, were wholly American property : upon which he seized them. This raised a storm : the planters, the custom-house, and the governor, were all against him. Subscriptions were opened, and presently filled,

for the purpose of carrying on the cause in behalf of the American captains : and the admiral, whose flag was at that time in the road, stood neutral. But the Americans and their abettors were not content with defensive law. The marines whom he had sent to secure the ships, had prevented some of the masters from going ashore ; and those persons, by whose depositions it appeared that the vessels and cargoes were American property, declared that they had given their testimony under bodily fear, for that a man with a drawn sword in his hand had stood over them the whole of the time. A rascally lawyer, whom the party employed, suggested this story ; and as the sentry at the cabin-door was a man with a drawn sword, the Americans made no scruple of swearing to this ridiculous falsehood, and commencing prosecutions against him accordingly. They laid their damages at the enormous amount of £40,000 ; and Nelson was obliged to keep close on board his own ship, lest he should be arrested for a sum for which it would have been impossible to find bail. The marshal frequently came on board to arrest him, but was always prevented by the address of the first lieutenant, Mr Wallis. Had he been taken, such was the temper of the people, that it was certain he would have been cast for the whole sum. One of his officers, one day, in speaking of the restraint which he was thus compelled to suffer, happened to use the word *pity* ! 'Pity !' exclaimed Nelson : 'Pity ! did you say ? I shall live, sir, to be envied ! and to that point I shall always direct my course.' Eight weeks he remained under this state of duresse. During that time the trial respecting these detained ships came on in the Court of Admiralty. He went on shore under a protection for the day from the judge ; but, notwithstanding this, the marshal was called upon to take that opportunity of arresting him, and the merchants promised to indemnify him for so doing. The judge, however, did his duty, and threatened to send the marshal to prison if he attempted to violate the protection of the court. Mr Herbert, the president of Nevis, behaved with singular generosity upon this occasion. Though no man was a greater sufferer by the measures which Nelson had pursued, he offered in court to become his bail for £10,000, if he chose to suffer the arrest. The lawyer whom he had chosen proved to be an able as well

as an honest man ; and, notwithstanding the opinions and pleadings of most of the counsel of the different islands, who maintained that ships of war were not justified in seizing American vessels without a deputation from the customs, the law was so explicit, the case so clear, and Nelson pleaded his own cause so well, that the four ships were condemned. During the progress of this business he sent a memorial home to the king : in consequence of which, orders were issued that he should be defended at the expense of the Crown.

He was at this time wooing the niece of his friend the president, the widow of Dr Nisbet, a physician. She had one child, a son, by name Josiah, who was three years old. One day Mr Herbert, who had hastened, half-dressed, to receive Nelson, exclaimed, on returning to his dressing-room, 'Good heavens ! if I did not find that great-little man, of whom everybody is so afraid, playing in the next room, under the dining-table, with Mrs Nisbet's child !' A few days afterwards Mrs Nisbet herself was first introduced to him, and thanked him for the partiality which he had shown her little boy. Her manners were mild and winning : and the captain, whose heart was easily susceptible of attachment, found no such imperious necessity for subduing his inclinations as had twice before withheld him from marrying. They were married on March 11, 1787 : Prince William Henry, who had come out to the West Indies the preceding winter, being present, by his own desire, to give away the bride. Mr Herbert, her uncle, was at this time so much displeased with his only daughter, that he had resolved to disinherit her, and leave his whole fortune, which was very great, to his niece. But Nelson, whose nature was too noble to let him profit by an act of injustice, interfered, and succeeded in reconciling the president to his child.

During his stay upon this station he had ample opportunity of observing the scandalous practices of the contractors, prize-agents, and other persons in the West Indies connected with the naval service. When he was first left with the command, and bills were brought him to sign for money which was owing for goods purchased for the navy, he required the original vouchers, that he might examine whether those goods had been really purchased at the market price : but to produce vouchers would

not have been convenient, and therefore was not the custom. Vouchers, he found, in that country, were no check whatever: the principle was, 'that a thing was always worth what it would bring:' and the merchants were in the habit of signing vouchers for each other, without even the appearance of looking at the articles. These accounts he sent home to the different departments which had been defrauded: but the peculators were too powerful; and they succeeded not merely in impeding inquiry, but even in raising prejudices against Nelson at the board of Admiralty, which it was many years before he could subdue.

Owing, probably, to these prejudices, and the influence of the peculators, he was treated, on his return to England, in a manner which had nearly driven him from the service. On the morning when orders were received to prepare the *Boreas* for being paid off, he expressed his joy to the senior officer in the Medway; saying, 'It will release me for ever from an ungrateful service, for it is my firm and unalterable determination, never again to set my foot on board a king's ship. Immediately after my arrival in town I shall wait on the first lord of the Admiralty, and resign my commission.' The officer to whom he thus communicated his intentions behaved in the wisest and most friendly manner; for finding it vain to dissuade him in his present state of feeling, he secretly interfered with the first lord to save him from a step so injurious to himself, little foreseeing how deeply the welfare and honour of England were at that moment at stake. This interference produced a letter from Lord Howe, the day before the ship was paid off, intimating a wish to see Captain Nelson as soon as he arrived in town: when, being pleased with his conversation, and perfectly convinced by what was then explained to him, of the propriety of his conduct, he desired that he might present him to the king on the first levee day: and the gracious manner in which Nelson was then received effectually removed his resentment.

Encouraged by the conduct of Lord Howe, and by this reception, Nelson renewed his attack upon the peculators with fresh spirit. He had interviews with Mr Rose, Mr Pitt, and Sir Charles Middleton; to all of whom he satisfactorily proved his charges. In consequence, it is said, these very extensive public frauds were at length put in a proper train to be provided

against in future ; his representations were attended to ; and every step which he recommended was adopted ; the investigation was put into a proper course, which ended in the detection and punishment of some of the culprits ; an immense saving was made to government, and thus its attention was directed to similar peculation in other parts of the colonies.

Nelson took his wife to his father's parsonage, meaning only to pay him a visit before they went to France ; a project which he had formed for the sake of acquiring a competent knowledge of the French language. But his father could not bear to lose him thus unnecessarily. The sight of his son, he declared, had given him new life. 'But, Horatio,' said he, 'it would have been better that I had not been thus cheered, if I am so soon to be bereaved of you again. Let me, my good son, see you whilst I can. My age and infirmities increase, and I shall not last long.' To such an appeal there could be no reply. Nelson took up his abode at the parsonage, and amused himself with the sports and occupations of the country. Sometimes he busied himself with farming the glebe ; sometimes spent the greater part of the day in the garden, where he would dig as if for the mere pleasure of wearying himself. Sometimes he went a birds'-nesting like a boy : and in these expeditions Mrs Nelson always, by his express desire, accompanied him. Coursing was his favourite amusement. Shooting, as he practised it, was far too dangerous for his companions : for he carried his gun upon the full cock, as if he were going to board an enemy ; and the moment a bird rose, he let fly, without ever putting the fowling-piece to his shoulder. It is not, therefore, extraordinary, that his having once shot a partridge should be remembered by his family among the remarkable events of his life.

But his time did not pass away thus without some vexatious cares to ruffle it. The affair of the American ships was not yet over, and he was again pestered with threats of prosecution. 'I have written them word,' said he, 'that I will have nothing to do with them, and they must act as they think proper. Government, I suppose, will do what is right, and not leave me in the lurch. We have heard enough lately of the consequence of the Navigation Act to this country. They may take my person :

but if sixpence would save me from a prosecution, I would not give it.' It was his great ambition at this time to possess a pony; and having resolved to purchase one, he went to a fair for that purpose. During his absence two men abruptly entered the parsonage, and inquired for him: they then asked for Mrs Nelson: and after they had made her repeatedly declare that she was really and truly the captain's wife, presented her with a writ, or notification, on the part of the American captains, who now laid their damages at £20,000, and they charged her to give it to her husband on his return. Nelson having bought his pony, came home with it in high spirits. He called out his wife to admire his purchase, and listen to all its excellences: nor was it till his glee had in some measure subsided, that the paper could be presented to him. His indignation was excessive: and, in the apprehension that he should be exposed to the anxieties of the suit, and the ruinous consequences which might ensue, he exclaimed, 'This affront I did not deserve! But I'll be trifled with no longer. I will write immediately to the treasury, and, if government will not support me, I am resolved to leave the country.' Accordingly, he informed the treasury, that if a satisfactory answer were not sent to him by return of post, he should take refuge in France. To this he expected he should be driven, and for this he arranged everything with his characteristic rapidity of decision. It was settled that he should depart immediately, and Mrs Nelson follow under the care of his elder brother Maurice, ten days after him. But the answer which he received from government quieted his fears: it stated, that Captain Nelson was a very good officer, and needed be under no apprehension, for he would assuredly be supported.

Here his disquietude upon this subject seems to have ended. In the winter of 1792, when we were on the eve of the revolutionary war, Nelson once more offered his services, earnestly requested a ship, and added, that if their lordships should be pleased to appoint him to a cockle-boat, he should feel satisfied. He was answered in the usual official form: 'Sir,—I have received your letter of the 5th instant, expressing your readiness to serve, and have read the same to my lords commissioners of the Admiralty.' On the 12th of December he received this dry acknowledgment. The fresh mortification did not, however,

affect him long: for, by the joint interest of the Duke and Lord Hood, he was appointed, on the 30th of January following, to the *Agamemnon*, of sixty-four guns.

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### CHAPTER III.

THE *Agamemnon* was ordered to the Mediterranean, under Lord Hood. The fleet arrived in those seas at a time when the south of France would willingly have formed itself into a separate republic, under the protection of England. But good principles had been at that time perilously abused by ignorant and profligate men; and, in its fear and hatred of democracy, the English government abhorred whatever was republican. Lord Hood could not take advantage of the fair occasion which presented itself; and which, if it had been seized with vigour, might have ended in dividing France:—but he negotiated with the people of Toulon, to take possession provisionally of their port and city; which, fatally for themselves, was done. Before the British fleet entered, Nelson was sent with despatches to Sir William Hamilton, our envoy at the court of Naples.

Having accomplished this mission, Nelson received orders to join Commodore Linzee, at Tunis, where he had been sent to expostulate with the dey upon the impolicy of his supporting the revolutionary government of France. Nelson represented to him the atrocity of that government. Such arguments were of little avail in Barbary: and when the dey was told that the French had put their sovereign to death, he dryly replied, that ‘Nothing could be more heinous; and yet, if historians told the truth, the English had once done the same.’ This answer had doubtless been suggested by the French about him: they had completely gained the ascendancy, and all negotiation on our part proved fruitless. Shortly afterwards Nelson was detached with a small squadron, to co-operate with General Paoli and the anti-Gallican party in Corsica.

Paoli had opened a correspondence with Lord Hood, promising, if the English would make an attack upon St Fiorenzo from the sea, he would, at the same time, attack it by land. This

promise he was unable to perform: and Commodore Linzee, who, in reliance upon it, was sent upon this service, was repulsed with some loss. Lord Hood, who had now been compelled to evacuate Toulon, suspected Paoli of intentionally deceiving him. This was an injurious suspicion. Shortly afterwards he despatched Lieutenant-Colonel (afterwards Sir John) Moore and Major Koehler to confer with him upon a plan of operations. While this negotiation was going on, Nelson cruised off the island with a small squadron, to prevent the enemy from throwing in supplies. Close to St Fiorenzo the French had a store-house of flour, near their only mill: he watched an opportunity, and landed 120 men, who threw the flour into the sea, burnt the mill, and re-embarked, before 1000 men, who were sent against him, could occasion him the loss of a single man. While he exerted himself thus, keeping out all supplies, intercepting despatches, attacking their outposts and forts, and cutting out vessels from the bay,—a species of warfare which depresses the spirit of an enemy more than it injures them, because of the sense of individual superiority which it indicates in the assailants,—troops were landed, and St Fiorenzo was besieged. The French, finding themselves unable to maintain their post, sunk one of their frigates, burnt another, and retreated to Bastia. Lord Hood submitted to General Dundas, who commanded the land forces, a plan for the reduction of this place: the general declined co-operating, thinking the attempt impracticable, without a reinforcement of 2000 men, which he expected from Gibraltar. Upon this Lord Hood determined to reduce it with the naval force under his command; and leaving part of his fleet off Toulon, he came with the rest to Bastia.

Lord Hood could only obtain a few artillerymen; and ordering on board that part of the troops who, having been embarked as marines, were borne on the ships' books as part of their respective complements, he began the siege with 1183 soldiers, artillerymen, and marines, and 250 sailors. 'We are but few,' said Nelson, 'but of the right sort; our general at St Fiorenzo not giving us one of the five regiments he has there lying idle.'

These men were landed on the 4th of April, under Lieutenant-Colonel Villettes and Nelson, who had now acquired from the army the title of brigadier.

The event of this siege justified the confidence of the sailors; but they themselves excused the opinion of the generals, when they saw what they had done. 'I am all astonishment,' said Nelson, 'when I reflect upon what we have achieved: 1000 regulars, 1500 national guards, and a large party of Corsican troops, 4000 in all, laying down their arms to 1200 soldiers, marines, and seamen!'

The *Agamemnon* was now despatched to co-operate at the siege of Calvi with General Sir Charles Stuart. Nelson had less responsibility here than at Bastia; and was acting with a man after his own heart, who was never sparing of himself, and slept every night in the advanced battery. But the service was not less hard than that of the former siege. 'We will fag ourselves to death,' said he to Lord Hood, 'before any blame shall lie at our doors. I trust it will not be forgotten that twenty-five pieces of heavy ordnance have been dragged to the different batteries, mounted, and all but three fought by seamen, except one artilleryman to point the guns.' The climate proved more destructive than the service; for this was during the period of the 'lion sun,' as they there call our season of the 'dog days.' Of 2000 men above half were sick, and the rest like so many phantoms. Nelson described himself as the reed among the oaks, bowing before the storm when they were laid low by it. 'All the prevailing disorders have attacked me,' said he, 'but I have not strength enough for them to fasten on.' The loss from the enemy was not great; but Nelson received a serious injury: a shot struck the ground near him, and drove the sand and small gravel into one of his eyes. He spoke of it slightly at the time: writing the same day to Lord Hood, he only said, that he got a little hurt that morning, not much; and the next day he said, he should be able to attend his duty in the evening. In fact, he suffered it to confine him only one day; but the sight was lost.

After the fall of Calvi, his services were, by a strange omission, altogether overlooked: and his name was not even mentioned in the list of wounded.

He was now sent with despatches to Mr Drake, at Genoa, and had his first interview with the Doge. The French had, at this time, taken possession of Vado Bay, in the Genoese terri-

tory; and Nelson foresaw, that if their thoughts were bent on the invasion of Italy, they would accomplish it the ensuing spring. 'The allied powers,' he said, 'were jealous of each other; and none but England was hearty in the cause.' His wish was for peace, on fair terms, because England, he thought, was draining herself, to maintain allies who would not fight for themselves. Lord Hood had now returned to England, and the command devolved on Admiral Hotham. The French, who had not yet been taught to feel their own inferiority upon the seas, braved us, in contempt, upon that element. They had a superior fleet in the Mediterranean, and they sent it out with express orders to seek the English and engage them. Accordingly, the Toulon fleet, consisting of seventeen ships of the line, and five smaller vessels, put to sea. Admiral Hotham received this information at Leghorn, and sailed immediately in search of them. He had with him fourteen sail of the line, and one Neapolitan seventy-four; but his ships were only half manned, containing but 7650 men, whereas the enemy had 16,900. He soon came in sight of them: a general action was expected; and Nelson, as was his custom on such occasions, wrote a hasty letter to his wife, as that which night possibly contain his last farewell. 'The lives of all,' said he, 'are in the hands of Him who knows best whether to preserve mine or not: my character and good name are in my own keeping.'

But however confident the French government might be of their naval superiority, the officers had no such feeling; and after manoeuvring for a day, in sight of the English fleet, they suffered themselves to be chased. One of their ships, the *Ca Ira*, of eighty-four guns, carried away her main and fore-top masts. The *Inconstant* frigate fired at the disabled ship, but received so many shot that she was obliged to leave her. Soon afterwards a French frigate took the *Ca Ira* in tow; and the *Sans-Culottes*, one hundred and twenty, and the *Jean Barras*, seventy-four, kept about gun-shot distance on her weather bow. The *Agamemnon* stood towards her, having no ship of the line to support her within several miles. As she drew near, the *Ca Ira* fired her stern guns so truly, that not a shot missed some part of the ship, and, latterly, the masts were struck by every shot. It had been Nelson's intention not to

fire before he touched her stern; but seeing how impossible it was he should be supported, and how certainly the *Agamemnon* must be severely cut up, if her masts were disabled, he altered his plan according to the occasion. As soon, therefore, as he was within a hundred yards of her stern, he ordered the helm to be put a-starboard, and the driver and after-sails to be brailed up and shivered; and, as the ship fell off, gave the enemy her whole broadside. They instantly braced up the after-yards, put the helm a-port, and stood after her again. This manœuvre he practised for two hours and a quarter, never allowing the *Ca Ira* to get a single gun from either side to bear on him; and when the French fired their after-guns now, it was no longer with coolness and precision, for every shot went far a-head. By this time her sails were hanging in tatters, her mizen-top-mast, mizen-top-sail, and cross-jack-yards, shot away. But the frigate which had her in tow hove in stays, and got her round. Both these French ships now brought their guns to bear, and opened their fire. The *Agamemnon* passed them within half-pistol shot; almost every shot passed over her, for the French had elevated their guns for the rigging, and for distant firing, and did not think of altering the elevation. As soon as the *Agamemnon*'s after-guns ceased to bear, she hove in stays, keeping a constant fire as she came round; and being worked, said Nelson, with as much exactness as if she had been turning into Spithead. On getting round, he saw that the *Sans Culottes*, which had wore, with many of the enemy's ships, was under his lee bow, and standing to leeward. The admiral, at the same time, made the signal for the van ships to join him. Upon this Nelson bore away, and prepared to set all sail; and the enemy, having saved their ship, hauled close to the wind, and opened upon him a distant and effectual fire. Only seven of the *Agamemnon*'s men were hurt—a thing which Nelson himself remarked as wonderful: her sails and rigging were very much cut, and she had many shots in her hull, and some between wind and water. The *Ca Ira* lost 110 men that day, and was so cut up, that she could not get a top-mast aloft during the night.

At daylight, on the following morning, the English ships were taken aback with a fine breeze at N.W., while the enemy's

fleet kept the southerly wind. The body of their fleet was about five miles distant; the *Ca Ira*, and the *Censeur*, seventy-four, which had her in tow, about three and a half. All sail was made to cut these ships off; and, as the French attempted to save them, a partial action was brought on. The *Agamemnon* was engaged with her yesterday's antagonist; but she had to fight on both sides the ship at the same time. The *Ca Ira* and the *Censeur* fought most gallantly: the first lost nearly 300 men, in addition to her former loss; the last 350. Both at last struck: and Lieutenant Andrews, of the *Agamemnon*, hoisted English colours on board them both. The rest of the enemy's ships behaved very ill. As soon as these vessels had struck, Nelson went to Admiral Hotham, and proposed that the two prizes should be left with the *Illustrious* and *Courageux*, which had been crippled in the action, and with four frigates, and that the rest of the fleet should pursue the enemy, and follow up the advantage to the utmost. But his reply was—‘We must be contented: we have done very well.’ ‘Now,’ said Nelson, ‘had we taken ten sail, and allowed the eleventh to escape, when it had been possible to have got at her, I could never have called it well done. Goodall backed me: I got him to write to the admiral; but it would not do. We should have had such a day as, I believe, the annals of England never produced.’ In this letter, the character of Nelson fully manifests itself. ‘I wish,’ said he, ‘to be an admiral, and in the command of the English fleet: I should very soon either do much, or be ruined: my disposition cannot bear tame and slow measures. Sure I am, had I commanded on the 14th, that either the whole French fleet would have graced my triumph, or I should have been in a confounded scrape.’ What the event would have been, he knew from his prophetic feelings and his own consciousness of power: and we also know it now, for Aboukir and Trafalgar have told it us.

About this time Nelson was made colonel of marines: a mark of approbation which he had long wished for rather than expected. It came in good season, for his spirits were oppressed by the thought that his services had not been acknowledged as they deserved.

He now entered upon a new line of service. The Austrian

and Sardinian armies, under General de Vins, required a British squadron to co-operate with them in driving the French from the Riviera di Genoa ; and as Nelson had been so much in the habit of soldiering, it was immediately fixed that the brigadier should go. He sailed from St Fiorenzo on this destination ; but fell in, off Cape del Mele, with the enemy's fleet, who immediately gave his squadron chase. Nelson bent his way back to St Fiorenzo, where the fleet, which was in the midst of watering and refitting, had, for seven hours, the mortification of seeing him almost in possession of the enemy, before the wind would allow them to put out to his assistance. The French, however, at evening, went off, not choosing to approach nearer the shore.

Nelson now proceeded to his station with eight sail of frigates under his command. Arriving at Genoa, he had a conference with Mr Drake, the British envoy to that state ; the result of which was, that the object of the British must be, to put an entire stop to all trade between Genoa, France, and the places occupied by the French troops ; for, unless this trade were stopped, it would be scarcely possible for the allied armies to hold their situation, and impossible for them to make any progress in driving the enemy out of the Riviera di Genoa. Mr Drake was of opinion, that even Nice might fall for want of supplies, if the trade with Genoa were cut off. This sort of blockade Nelson could not carry on without great risk to himself. A captain in the navy, as he represented to the envoy, is liable to prosecution for detention and damages.

When Nelson first saw General de Vins, he thought him an able man, who was willing to act with vigour. But the English commodore soon began to suspect that the Austrian general was little disposed to any active operations. Nelson was at this time, according to his own expression, placed in a cleft stick. Mr Drake, the Austrian minister, and the Austrian general, all joined in requiring him not to leave Genoa. On the other hand, he knew, that if he were not at Pietra, the enemy's gun-boats would harass the left flank of the Austrians, who, if they were defeated, as was to be expected, from the spirit of all their operations, would very probably lay their defeat to the want of assistance from the *Agamemnon*. The attack was made, as he foresaw ; and the gunboats brought their fire to bear upon the

Austrians. It so happened, however, that the left flank, which was exposed to them, was the only part of the army that behaved well ; this division stood its ground till the centre, and the right wing fled, and then retreated in a soldier-like manner. General de Vins gave up the command in the middle of the battle, pleading ill health. 'From that moment,' says Nelson, 'not a soldier stayed at his post. Many thousands ran away who had never seen the enemy ; some of them thirty miles from the advanced posts. Had I not—though, I own, against my inclination—been kept at Genoa, from eight to ten thousand men would have been taken prisoners, and, amongst the number, General de Vins himself : but, by this means, the pass of the Bocchetta was kept open. The purser of the ship, who was at Vado, ran with the Austrians eighteen miles without stopping : the men without arms, officers without soldiers, women without assistance. The oldest officer, say they, never heard of so complete a defeat, and certainly without any reason. Thus has ended my campaign. We have established the French republic ; which, but for us, I verily believe, would never have been settled by such a volatile, changeable people.'

The defeat of General de Vins gave the enemy possession of the Genoese coast from Savona to Voltri ; and it deprived the Austrians of their direct communication with the English fleet. The *Agamemnon*, therefore, could no longer be useful on this station, and Nelson sailed for Leghorn to refit. When the ship went into dock, there was not a mast, yard, sail, or any part of the rigging, but what stood in need of repair, having been cut to pieces with shot. The hull was so damaged, that it had for some time been secured by cables, which were served or thrapped round it.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

SIR JOHN JERVIS had now arrived to take the command of the Mediterranean fleet. The *Agamemnon* having, as her captain said, been made as fit for sea as a rotten ship could be, Nelson sailed from Leghorn, and joined the admiral in Fiorenzo Bay.

Sir John Jervis offered him the *St George*, ninety, or the *Zealous*, seventy-four, and asked if he should have any objection to serve under him with his flag. He replied, that if the *Agamemnon* were ordered home, and his flag were not arrived, he should, on many accounts, wish to return to England : still, if the war continued, he should be very proud of hoisting his flag under Sir John's command. 'We cannot spare you,' said Sir John, 'either as captain or admiral.' Accordingly, he resumed his station in the Gulf of Genoa.

General Beaulieu, who had now superseded De Vins in the command of the allied Austrian and Sardinian army, ordered an attack to be made upon the post of Voltri; it was made twelve hours before the time which he had fixed, and before he arrived to direct it. This drew on the defeat of the Austrians. Bonaparte, with a celerity which had never before been witnessed in modern war, pursued his advantages ; and, in the course of a fortnight, dictated to the court of Turin terms of peace, or rather of submission, by which all the strongest places of Piedmont were put into his hands. \*

On one occasion, and only on one, Nelson was able to impede the progress of this new conqueror. Six vessels, laden with cannon and ordnance-stores for the siege of Mantua, sailed from Toulon for St Pier d'Arena. Assisted by Captain Cockburn, in the *Meleager*, he drove them under a battery, pursued them, silenced the batteries, and captured the whole. Bonaparte perceived that the conquest of all Italy was within his reach : treaties, and the rights of neutral or friendly powers, were as little regarded by him as by the government for which he acted. In open contempt of both he entered Tuscany, and took possession of Leghorn. In consequence of this movement, Nelson blockaded that port, and landed a British force in the Isle of Elba, to secure Porto Ferrajo. Soon afterwards he took the island of Caprera, which had formerly belonged to Corsica, being less than forty miles distant from it : a distance, however, short as it was, which enabled the Genoese to retain it, after their infamous sale of Corsica to France. Genoa had now taken part with France : its government had long covertly assisted the French, and now willingly yielded to the first compulsory menace which required them to exclude the English from their

ports. Capraja was seized, in consequence : but this act of vigour was not followed up as it ought to have been. England at that time depended too much upon the feeble governments of the Continent, and too little upon itself. It was determined by the British cabinet to evacuate Corsica, as soon as Spain should form an offensive alliance with France.

The Viceroy, Sir Gilbert Elliot, deeply felt the impolicy and ignominy of this evacuation. The fleet also was ordered to leave the Mediterranean. This resolution was so contrary to the last instructions which had been received, that Nelson exclaimed, ' Do his Majesty's ministers know their own minds ? They at home,' said he, ' do not know what this fleet is capable of performing—anything and everything. Much as I shall rejoice to see England, I lament our present orders in sackcloth and ashes, so dishonourable to the dignity of England, whose fleets are equal to meet the world in arms ; and of all the fleets I ever saw, I never beheld one, in point of officers and men, equal to Sir John Jervis's, who is a commander-in-chief able to lead them to glory.' Sir Gilbert Elliot believed that the great body of the Corsicans were perfectly satisfied, as they had good reason to be, with the British government, sensible of its advantages, and attached to it. However this may have been, when they found that the English intended to evacuate the island, they naturally and necessarily sent to make their peace with the French. The partisans of France found none to oppose them. A committee of thirty took upon them the government of Bastia, and sequestered all the British property : armed Corsicans mounted guard at every place, and a plan was laid for seizing the viceroy. Nelson, who was appointed to superintend the evacuation, frustrated these projects. At a time when everyone else despaired of saving stores, cannon, provisions, or property of any kind, and a privateer was moored across the mole-head to prevent all boats from passing, he sent word to the committee, that if the slightest opposition were made to the embarkment and removal of British property, he would batter the town down. The privateer pointed her guns at the officer who carried this message, and muskets were levelled against his boats from the mole-head. Upon this, Captain Sutton, of the *Egmont*, pulling out his watch, gave

them a quarter of an hour to deliberate upon their answer. In five minutes after the expiration of that time, the ships, he said, would open their fire. Upon this the very sentinels scampered off, and every vessel came out of the mole. A ship-owner complained to the commodore, that the municipality refused to let him take his goods out of the custom-house. Nelson directed him to say, that unless they were instantly delivered, he would open his fire. The committee turned pale; and, without answering a word, gave him the keys. Their last attempt was to levy a duty upon the things that were re-embarked. He sent them word, that he would pay them a disagreeable visit, if there were any more complaints. This was on the 14th of October: during the five following days the work of embarkation was carried on, the private property was saved, and public stores to the amount of £200,000. The French, favoured by the Spanish fleet, which was at that time within twelve leagues of Bastia, pushed over troops from Leghorn, who landed near Cape Corse on the 18th, and on the 20th, at one in the morning, entered the citadel, an hour only after the British had spiked the guns, and evacuated it. Nelson embarked at daybreak, being the last person who left the shore; having thus, as he said, seen the first and the last of Corsica.

Having thus ably affected this humiliating service, Nelson was ordered to hoist his broad pendant on board the *Minerve* frigate, Captain George Cockburn, and, with the *Blanche* under his command, proceed to Porto Ferrajo, and superintend the evacuation of that place also. On his way, he fell in with two Spanish frigates, the *Sabina* and the *Ceres*. The *Minerve* engaged the former, which was commanded by Don Jacobo Stuart, a descendant of the Duke of Berwick. After an action of three hours, during which the Spaniards lost 164 men, the *Sabina* struck. The Spanish captain, who was the only surviving officer, had hardly been conveyed on board the *Minerve*, when another enemy's frigate came up, compelled her to cast off the prize, and brought her a second time to action. After half an hour's trial of strength, this new antagonist wore and hauled off: but a Spanish squadron of two ships of the line and two frigates came in sight. The *Blanche*, from which the *Ceres* had got off, was far to windward, and the *Minerve* escaped only by

the anxiety of the enemy to recover their own ship. As soon as Nelson reached Porto Ferrajo, he sent his prisoner in a flag of truce to Cartagena, having returned him his sword ; this he did in honour to the gallantry which Don Jacobo had displayed, and not without some feeling of respect for his ancestry. 'I felt it,' said he, 'consonant to the dignity of my country, and I always act as I feel right, without regard to custom : he was reputed the best officer in Spain, and his men were worthy of such a commander.' By the same flag of truce he sent back all the Spanish prisoners at Porto Ferrajo, in exchange for whom he received his own men who had been taken in the prize.

Nelson's mind had long been irritated and depressed by the fear that a general action would take place before he could join the fleet. At length he sailed from Porto Ferrajo with a convoy for Gibraltar ; and having reached that place, proceeded to the westward in search of the admiral. Off the mouth of the Straits he fell in with the Spanish fleet ; and, on the 13th of February, reaching the station off Cape St Vincent, communicated this intelligence to Sir John Jervis. He was now directed to shift his broad pendant on board the *Captain*, seventy-four, Captain R. W. Miller ; and, before sunset, the signal was made to prepare for action, and to keep, during the night, in close order. At day-break the enemy were in sight. Their admiral, Don Joseph de Cordova, had learnt from an American, on the 5th, that the English had only nine ships, which was indeed the case when his informer had seen them ; for a reinforcement of five ships from England, under Admiral Parker, had not then joined, and the *Culloden* had parted company. Upon this information, the Spanish commander, instead of going into Cadiz, as was his intention when he sailed from Cartagena, determined to seek an enemy so inferior in force ; and relying, with fatal confidence, upon the American account, he suffered his ships to remain too far dispersed, and in some disorder.

Before the enemy could form a regular order of battle, Sir John Jervis, by carrying a press of sail, came up with them, passed through their fleet, then tacked, and thus cut off nine of their ships from the main body. These ships attempted to form on the larboard tack, either with a design of passing through the British line, or to leeward of it, and thus rejoining their

friends.' Only one of them succeeded in this attempt ; and that only because she was so covered with smoke that her intention was not discovered till she had reached the rear : the others were so warmly received, that they put about, took to flight, and did not appear again in the action till its close. The admiral was now able to direct his attention to the enemy's main body, which was still superior in number to his whole fleet, and more so in weight of metal. He made signal to tack in succession. Nelson, whose station was in the rear of the British line, perceived that the Spaniards were bearing up before the wind, with an intention of forming their line, going large, and joining their separated ships ; or else, of getting off without an engagement. To prevent either of these schemes, he disobeyed the signal without a moment's hesitation, and ordered his ship to be wore. This at once brought him into action with the *Santissima Trinidad*, one hundred and thirty-six, the *San Josef*, one hundred and twelve, the *Salvador del Mundo*, one hundred and twelve, the *San Nicolas*, eighty, the *San Isidro*, seventy-four, another seventy-four, and another first-rate. Trowbridge, in the *Culloden*, immediately joined, and most nobly supported him ; and for nearly an hour did the *Culloden* and *Captain* maintain what Nelson called 'this apparently, but not really, unequal contest' ;—such was the advantage of skill and discipline, and the confidence which brave men derive from them. The *Blenheim* then passing between them and the enemy, gave them a respite, and poured in her fire upon the Spaniards. The *Salvador del Mundo* and *San Isidro* dropped a-stern, and were fired into, in a masterly style, by the *Excellent*, Captain Collingwood. The *San Isidro* struck ; and Nelson thought that the *Salvador* struck also. 'But Collingwood,' says he, 'disdaining the parade of taking possession of beaten enemies, most gallantly pushed up, with every sail set, to save his old friend and messmate, who was, to appearance, in a critical situation ;' for the *Captain* was at this time actually fired upon by three first-rates, by the *San Nicolas*, and by a seventy-four, within about pistol-shot of that vessel. The *Blenheim* was ahead, the *Culloden* crippled and a-stern. Collingwood ranged up, and hauling up his mainsail just a-stern, passed within ten feet of the *San Nicolas*, giving her a most tremendous fire, then passed on for

the *Santissima Trinidad*. The *San Nicolas* luffing up, the *San Josef* fell on board her, and Nelson resumed his station abreast of them, and close alongside. The *Captain* was now incapable of further service, either in the line or in chase : she had lost her fore-top-mast ; not a sail, shroud, or rope, was left, and her wheel was shot away. Nelson, therefore, directed Captain Miller to put the helm a-starboard, and, calling for the boarders, ordered them to board.

Captain Berry, who had lately been Nelson's first lieutenant, was the first man who leaped into the enemy's mizen-chains. Miller, when in the very act of going, was ordered by Nelson to remain. Berry was supported from the sprit-sail yard, which locked in the *San Nicolas*'s main rigging. A soldier of the 69th broke the upper quarter-gallery window, and jumped in, followed by the commodore himself, and by others as fast as possible. The cabin doors were fastened, and the Spanish officers fired their pistols at them through the window : the doors were soon forced, and the Spanish brigadier fell while retreating to the quarter-deck. Nelson pushed on, and found Berry in possession of the poop, and the Spanish ensign hauling down. He passed on to the forecastle, where he met two or three Spanish officers, and received their swords. The English were now in full possession of every part of the ship ; and a fire of pistols and musketry opened upon them from the admiral's stern gallery of the *San Josef*. Nelson having placed sentinels at the different ladders, and ordered Captain Miller to send more men into the prize, gave orders for boarding that ship from the *San Nicolas*. It was done in an instant, he himself leading the way, and exclaiming—‘Westminster Abbey, or victory !’ Berry assisted him into the main-chains ; and at that moment a Spanish officer looked over the quarter-deck-rail, and said they surrendered. It was not long before he was on the quarter-deck, where the Spanish captain presented to him his sword, and told him the admiral was below, dying of his wounds. There, on the quarter-deck of an enemy's first-rate, he received the swords of the officers, giving them, as they were delivered, one by one, to William Fearney, one of his old ‘Agamemnons,’ who, with the utmost coolness, put them under his arm. One of his sailors came up, and, with an Englishman's feeling, took him by the

hand, saying, he might not soon have such another place to do it in, and he was heartily glad to see him there. Twenty-four of the *Captain's* men were killed, and fifty-six wounded ; a fourth part of the loss sustained by the whole squadron falling upon this ship. Nelson received only a few bruises.

The Spaniards had still eighteen or nineteen ships, which had suffered little or no injury : that part of the fleet which had been separated from the main body in the morning was now coming up, and Sir John Jervis made signal to bring-to. His ships could not have formed without abandoning those which they had captured, and running to leeward : the *Captain* was lying a perfect wreck on board her two prizes ; and many of the other vessels were so shattered in their masts and rigging as to be wholly unmanageable. The Spanish admiral, meantime, according to his official account, being altogether undecided in his own opinion respecting the state of the fleet, inquired of his captains whether it was proper to renew the action : nine of them answered explicitly, that it was not ; others replied that it was expedient to delay the business.

As soon as the action was discontinued, Nelson went on board the admiral's ship. Sir John Jervis received him on the quarter-deck, took him in his arms, and said he could not sufficiently thank him. For this victory the commander-in-chief was rewarded with the title of Earl St Vincent. Nelson, who, before the action was known in England, had been advanced to the rank of rear-admiral, had the Order of the Bath given him. The sword of the Spanish rear-admiral, which Sir John Jervis insisted upon his keeping, he presented to the mayor and corporation of Norwich. The freedom of that city was voted him on this occasion. But of all the numerous congratulations which he received, none could have affected him with deeper delight than that which came from his venerable father. 'I thank my God,' said this excellent man, 'with all the power of a grateful soul, for the mercies He has most graciously bestowed on me in preserving you. Not only my few acquaintance here, but the people in general, met me at every corner with such handsome words, that I was obliged to retire from the public eye. The height of glory to which your professional judgment, united with a proper degree of bravery,

guarded by Providence, has raised you, few sons, my dear child, attain to, and fewer fathers live to see. Tears of joy have involuntarily trickled down my furrowed cheeks. Who could stand the force of such general congratulation? The name and services of Nelson have sounded throughout this city of Bath—from the common ballad-singer to the public theatre.' The good old man concluded by telling him, that the field of glory, in which he had so long been conspicuous, was still open, and by giving him his blessing.

Sir Horatio, who had now hoisted his flag as rear-admiral of the blue, was sent to bring away the troops from Porto Ferrajo: having performed this, he shifted his flag to the *Theseus*. While there, he was employed in the command of the inner squadron at the blockade of Cadiz. During this service, the most perilous action occurred in which he was ever engaged. Making a night attack upon the Spanish gun-boats, his barge was attacked by an armed launch, under their commander, Don Miguel Tregoyen, carrying twenty-six men. Nelson had with him only his ten bargemen, Captain Freemantle, and his coxswain, John Sykes, an old and faithful follower, who twice saved the life of his admiral, by parrying the blows that were aimed at him, and, at last, actually interposed his own head to receive the blow of a Spanish sabre, which he could not by any other means avert;—thus dearly was Nelson beloved. This was a desperate service—hand to hand with swords: and Nelson always considered that his personal courage was more conspicuous on this occasion than on any other during his whole life. Notwithstanding the great disproportion of numbers, eighteen of the enemy were killed, all the rest wounded, and their launch taken.

Twelve days after this rencontre, Nelson sailed at the head of an expedition against Teneriffe. A report had prevailed a few months before, that the viceroy of Mexico, with the treasure-ships, had put into that island. This had led Nelson to meditate the plan of an attack upon it, which he communicated to Earl St Vincent.

The plan was, that the boats should land in the night between the fort on the N.E. side of Santa Cruz bay and the town, make themselves masters of that fort, and then send a summons to the governor. By midnight, the three frigates, having the force

on board which was intended for this debarkation, approached within three miles of the place ; but owing to a strong gale of wind in the offing, and a strong current against them in-shore, they were not able to get within a mile of the landing-place before daybreak ; and then they were seen, and their intention discovered. Trowbridge and Bowen, with Captain Oldfield, of the marines, went upon this to consult with the admiral what was to be done ; and it was resolved that they should attempt to get possession of the heights above the fort. The frigates accordingly landed their men ; and Nelson stood in with the line-of-battle ships, meaning to batter the fort, for the purpose of distracting the attention of the garrison. A calm and contrary current hindered him from getting within a league of the shore ; and the heights were by this time so secured, and manned with such a force, as to be judged impracticable. Thus foiled in his plans by circumstances of wind and tide, he still considered it a point of honour that some attempt should be made. This was on the 22nd of July : he re-embarked his men that night, got the ships, on the 24th, to anchor about two miles north of the town, and made show as if he intended to attack the heights.

At eleven o'clock, the boats, containing between 600 and 700 men, with 180 on board the *Fox* cutter, and from 70 to 80 in a boat which had been taken the day before, proceeded in six divisions toward the town, conducted by all the captains of the squadron, except Freemantle and Bowen, who attended with Nelson to regulate and lead the way to the attack. They were to land on the mole, and thence hasten, as fast as possible, into the great square ; then form, and proceed as should be found expedient. They were not discovered till about half-past one o'clock, when, being within half gun-shot of the landing-place, Nelson directed the boats to cast off from each other, give a huzza, and push for the shore. But the Spaniards were excellently well prepared : the alarm-bells answered the huzza, and a fire of thirty or forty pieces of cannon, with musketry from one end of the town to the other, opened upon the invaders. Nothing, however, could check the intrepidity with which they advanced. The night was exceedingly dark ; most of the boats missed the mole, and went on shore through a raging surf,

which stove all to the left of it. The admiral, Freemantle, Thompson, Bowen, and four or five other boats, found the mole : they stormed it instantly, and carried it, though it was defended, as they imagined, by four or five hundred men. Its guns, which were six-and-twenty pounders, were spiked ; but such a heavy fire of musketry and grape was kept up from the citadel, and the houses at the head of the mole, that the assailants could not advance, and nearly all of them were killed or wounded.

In the act of stepping out of the boat, Nelson received a shot through the right elbow, and fell. Nisbet, who was close to him, placed him at the bottom of the boat, and laid his hat over the shattered arm, lest the sight of the blood, which gushed out in great abundance, should increase his faintness. He then examined the wound ; and taking some silk handkerchiefs from his neck, bound them round tight above the lacerated vessels. Had it not been for this presence of mind in his stepson, Nelson must have perished. One of his bargemen, by name Lovel, tore his shirt into shreds, and made a sling with them for the broken limb. They then collected five other seamen, by whose assistance they succeeded, at length, in getting the boat afloat ; for it had grounded with the falling tide. In a few minutes, a general shriek was heard from the crew of the *Fox*, which had received a shot under water, and went down. Ninety-seven men were lost in her ; eighty-three were saved, many by Nelson himself, whose exertions on this occasion greatly increased the pain and danger of his wound.

The total loss of the English, in killed, wounded, and drowned, amounted to 250. Nelson made no mention of his own wound in his official despatches ; but in a private letter to Lord St Vincent—the first which he wrote with his left hand—he shows himself to have been deeply affected by the failure of this enterprise. ‘I am become,’ he said, ‘a burthen to my friends, and useless to my country : but by my last letter you will perceive my anxiety for the promotion of my step-son, Josiah Nisbet. When I leave your command, I become dead to the world :—I go hence, and am no more seen.’ ‘A left-handed admiral,’ he said in a subsequent letter, ‘will never again be considered as useful ; therefore the sooner I get to a very

humble cottage the better ; and make room for a sounder man to serve the state.'

His step-son, according to his wish, was immediately promoted ; and honours enough to heal his wounded spirit awaited him in England. Letters were addressed to him by the First Lord of the Admiralty, and by his steady friend, the Duke of Clarence, to congratulate him on his return, covered as he was with glory. He assured the duke, in his reply, that not a scrap of that ardour with which he had hitherto served his king had been shot away. The freedom of the cities of Bristol and London were conferred on him : he was invested with the Order of the Bath ; and received a pension of £1000 a-year.

His sufferings from the lost limb were long and painful. He had scarcely any intermission of pain, day or night, for three months after his return to England.

About the end of November, after a night of sound sleep, he found the arm nearly free from pain. From that time it began to heal. As soon as he thought his health established, he sent the following form of thanksgiving to the minister of St George's, Hanover Square : ' An officer desires to return thanks to Almighty God for his perfect recovery from a severe wound, and also for the many mercies bestowed on him.'

Not having been in England till now, since he lost his eye, he went to receive a year's pay, as smart money ; but could not obtain payment, because he had neglected to bring a certificate from a surgeon, that the sight was actually destroyed. A little irritated that this form should be insisted upon,—because, though the fact was not apparent, he thought it was sufficiently notorious,—he procured a certificate, at the same time, for the loss of his arm ; saying, they might just as well doubt one as the other. This put him in good humour with himself, and with the clerk who had offended him. On his return to the office, the clerk, finding it was only the annual pay of captain, observed, he thought it had been more. ' Oh ! ' replied Nelson, ' this is only for an eye.' In a few days I shall come for an arm ; and in a little time longer, God knows, most probably for a leg.' Accordingly, he soon afterwards went ; and with perfect good humour exhibited the certificate of the loss of his arm.

## CHAPTER V.

EARLY in the year 1798, Sir Horatio Nelson hoisted his flag in the *Vanguard*, and was ordered to rejoin Earl St Vincent.

Immediately on his rejoining the fleet, he was despatched to the Mediterranean, with a small squadron, in order to ascertain, if possible, the object of the great expedition which at that time was fitting out, under Bonaparte, at Toulon.

The first news of the enemy's armament was, that it had surprised Malta. Nelson formed a plan for attacking it while at anchor at Gozo: but on the 22nd of June intelligence reached him that the French had left that island on the 16th, the day after their arrival. It was clear that their destination was eastward—he thought for Egypt—and for Egypt, therefore, he made all sail. He arrived off Alexandria on the 28th, and the enemy was not there, neither was there any account of them. Nelson then shaped his course to the northward, for Caramania, and steered from thence along the southern side of Candia, carrying a press of sail, both night and day, with a contrary wind. But baffled in his pursuit, he returned to Sicily. The Neapolitan ministry had determined to give his squadron no assistance, being resolved to do nothing which could possibly endanger their peace with the French Directory; by means, however, of Lady Hamilton's influence at court, he procured secret orders to the Sicilian governors; and, under those orders, obtained everything which he wanted at Syracuse:—a timely supply; without which, he always said, he could not have recommenced his pursuit with any hope of success.

On the 25th of July he sailed from Syracuse for the Morea. Anxious beyond measure, and irritated that the enemy should so long have eluded him, the tediousness of the nights made him impatient; and the officer of the watch was repeatedly called on to let him know the hour, and convince him, who measured time by his own eagerness, that it was not yet day-break. The squadron made the gulf of Coron on the 28th.

Trowbridge entered the port, and returned with intelligence that the French had been seen about four weeks before steering to the S.E. from Candia. Nelson then determined immediately to return to Alexandria, and the British fleet accordingly, with every sail set, stood once more for the coast of Egypt. On the 1st of August, about ten in the morning, they came in sight of Alexandria; the port had been vacant and solitary when they saw it last; it was now crowded with ships, and they perceived with exultation that the tri-colour flag was flying upon the walls. At four in the afternoon, Captain Hood, in the *Zealous*, made the signal for the enemy's fleet. For many preceding days Nelson had hardly taken either sleep or food: he now ordered his dinner to be served, while preparations were making for battle; and when his officers rose from the table, and went to their separate stations, he said to them: 'Before this time to-morrow, I shall have gained a peerage or Westminster Abbey.'

The French, steering direct for Candia, had made an angular passage for Alexandria; whereas Nelson, in pursuit of them, made straight for that place, and thus materially shortened the distance.

The French fleet arrived at Alexandria on the 1st of July; and Brueys, not being able to enter the port, which time and neglect had ruined, moored his ships in Aboukir Bay, choosing the strongest position which he could possibly take in an open road. The commissary of the fleet said, they were moored in such a manner as to bid defiance to a force more than double their own. This presumption could not then be thought unreasonable. Admiral Barrington, when moored in a similar manner off St Lucia, in the year 1778, beat off the Comte d'Estaing in three several attacks, though his force was inferior by almost one-third to that which assailed it. Here, the advantage of numbers, both in ships, guns, and men, was in favour of the French. They had thirteen ships of the line and four frigates, carrying 1196 guns, and 11,230 men. The English had the same number of ships of the line, and one fifty-gun ship, carrying 1012 guns and 8068 men. The English ships were all seventy-fours; the French had three eighty-gun ships, and one three-decker of 120.

The moment Nelson perceived the position of the French,

that intuitive genius with which he was endowed displayed itself ; and it instantly struck him, that where there was room for an enemy's ship to swing, there was room for one of ours to anchor. The plan which he intended to pursue, therefore, was to keep entirely on the outer side of the French line, and station his ships, as far as he was able, one on the outer bow, and another on the outer quarter, of each of the enemy's. Captain Berry, when he comprehended the scope of the design, exclaimed with transport, 'If we succeed, what will the world say !'—'There is no *if* in the case,' replied the admiral : 'that we shall succeed, is certain : who may live to tell the story, is a very different question.'

As the squadron advanced, they were assailed by a shower of shot and shells from the batteries on the island, and the enemy opened a steady fire from the starboard side of their whole line, within half gun-shot distance, full into the bows of our van ships. It was received in silence, the men on board every ship were employed aloft in furling sails, and below in tending the braces, and making ready for anchoring.

A French brig was instructed to decoy the English, by manœuvring so as to tempt them toward a shoal lying off the island of Bequieres ; but Nelson either knew the danger, or suspected some deceit ; and the lure was unsuccessful. Captain Foley led the way in the *Goliath*. He had long conceived that if the enemy were moored in line of battle in with the land, the best plan of attack would be to lead between them and the shore, because the French guns on that side were not likely to be manned, nor even ready for action. Intending, therefore, to fix himself on the inner bow of the *Guerrier*, he kept as near the edge of the bank as the depth of water would admit ; but his anchor hung, and having opened his fire, he drifted to the second ship, the *Conquerant*, before it was clear ; then anchored by the stern, inside of her, and in ten minutes shot away her mast.

While the advanced ships doubled the French line, the *Van-guard* was the first that anchored on the outer side of the enemy, within half pistol-shot of their third ship, the *Spartiate*. The action began at half-after six ; about seven, night closed, and there was no other light than that from the fire of the contending fleets.

The two first ships of the French line had been dismasted within a quarter of an hour after the commencement of the action; and the others had in that time suffered so severely, that victory was already certain. The third, fourth, and fifth, were taken possession of at half-past eight.

Meantime, Nelson received a severe wound on the head from a piece of langridge shot. Captain Berry caught him in his arms as he was falling. The great effusion of blood occasioned an apprehension that the wound was mortal: Nelson himself thought so: a large flap of the skin of the forehead, cut from the bone, had fallen over one eye: and the other being blind, he was in total darkness. When he was carried down, the surgeon,—in the midst of a scene scarcely to be conceived by those who have never seen a cock-pit in time of action, and the heroism which is displayed amid its horrors,—with a natural and pardonable eagerness, quitted the poor fellow then under his hands, that he might instantly attend the admiral. ‘No!’ said Nelson, ‘I will take my turn with my brave fellows.’ Nor would he suffer his own wound to be examined till every man who had been previously wounded was properly attended to. Fully believing that the wound was mortal, and that he was about to die, as he had ever desired, in battle and in victory, he called the chaplain, and desired him to deliver what he supposed to be his dying remembrance to Lady Nelson.

When the surgeon came in due time to examine his wound, the most anxious silence prevailed; and the joy of the wounded men, and of the whole crew, when they heard that the hurt was merely superficial, gave Nelson deeper pleasure than the unexpected assurance that his life was in no danger. The surgeon requested, and as far as he could, ordered him to remain quiet. He was therefore left alone; when suddenly a cry was heard on the deck, that the enemy’s ship, the *Orient*, was on fire. In the confusion, he found his way up, unassisted and unnoticed; and, to the astonishment of every one, appeared on the quarter-deck, where he immediately gave orders that boats should be sent to the relief of the enemy.

It was soon after nine that the fire on board the *Orient* broke out. Brueys (the French commander) was dead: he had re-

ceived three wounds, yet would not leave his post : a fourth cut him almost in two. He desired not to be carried below, but to be left to die upon deck. The flames soon mastered his ship. Her sides had just been painted ; and the oil-jars and paint-buckets were lying on the poop. By the prodigious light of this conflagration, the situation of the two fleets could now be perceived, the colours of both being clearly distinguishable. About ten o'clock the ship blew up, with a shock which was felt to the very bottom of every vessel. Many of her officers and men jumped overboard, some clinging to the spars and pieces of wreck, with which the sea was strewn, others swimming to escape from the destruction which they momentarily dreaded. Some were picked up by our boats ; and some, even in the heat and fury of the action, were dragged into the lower ports of the nearest British vessel by the British sailors. The greater part of her crew, however, stood the danger till the last, and continued to fire from the lower deck. This tremendous explosion was followed by a silence not less awful : the firing immediately ceased on both sides ; and the first sound which broke the silence was the dash of her shattered masts and yards, falling into the water from the vast height to which they had been exploded. It is upon record, that a battle between two armies was once broken off by an earthquake : such an event would be felt like a miracle ; but no incident in war, produced by human means, has ever equalled the sublimity of this instantaneous pause, and all its circumstances.

About seventy of the *Orient's* crew were saved by the English boats. Among the many hundreds who perished were the commodore, Casa-Bianca, and his son, a brave boy, only ten years old.

The firing recommenced with the ships to leeward of the centre, and continued till about three. At day-break, the *Guillaume Tell*, and the *Genereur*, the two rear ships of the enemy, were the only French ships of the line which had their colours flying ; they cut their cables in the forenoon, not having been engaged, and stood out to sea, and two frigates with them. These four vessels, however, were all that escaped ; and the victory was the most complete and glorious in the annals of naval history. 'Victory,' said Nelson, 'is not a name strong

enough for such a scene ;' he called it a conquest. Of thirteen sail of the line, nine were taken, and two burnt: of the four frigates, one was sunk, another, the *Artemise*, was burnt in a villainous manner by her captain, M. Estandlet, who, having fired a broadside at the *Thessaloniki*, struck his colours, then set fire to the ship, and escaped with most of his crew to shore. The British loss, in killed and wounded, amounted to 895. Westcott was the only captain who fell: 3105 of the French, including the wounded, were sent on shore by cartel, and 5225 perished.

As soon as the conquest was completed, Nelson sent orders through the fleet, to return thanksgiving in every ship for the victory with which Almighty God had blessed his Majesty's arms. The French at Rosetta, who with miserable fear beheld the engagement, were at a loss to understand the stillness of the fleet during the performance of this solemn duty; but it seemed to affect many of the prisoners, officers as well as men: and graceless and godless as the officers were, some of them remarked, that it was no wonder such order was preserved in the British navy, when the minds of our men could be impressed with such sentiments after so great a victory, and at a moment of such confusion. The French at Rosetta, seeing their four ships sail out of the bay unmolested, endeavoured to persuade themselves that they were in possession of the place of battle. But it was in vain thus to attempt, against their own secret and certain conviction, to deceive themselves: and even if they could have succeeded in this, the bonfires which the Arabs kindled along the whole coast, and over the country, for the three following nights, would soon have undeceived them. Thousands of Arabs and Egyptians lined the shore, and covered the house-tops during the action, rejoicing in the destruction which had overtaken their invaders. Long after the battle, innumerable bodies were seen floating about the bay, in spite of all the exertions which were made to sink them, as well from fear of pestilence, as from the loathing and horror which the sight occasioned. The shore, for an extent of four leagues, was covered with wreck; and the Arabs found employment for many days in burning on the beach the fragments which were cast up, for the sake of the iron.

The victory was complete; but Nelson could not pursue it as he would have done, for want of means. Had he been provided with small craft, nothing could have prevented the destruction of the store-ships and transports in the port of Alexandria:—four bomb-vessels would at that time have burnt the whole in a few hours. ‘Were I to die this moment,’ said he in his despatches to the Admiralty, ‘want of frigates would be found stamped on my heart! No words of mine can express what I have suffered, and am suffering, for want of them.’

Nelson was now at the summit of glory: congratulations, rewards, and honours, were showered upon him by all the states, and princes, and powers, to whom his-victory gave a respite. The first communication of this nature which he received was from the Turkish Sultan: who, as soon as the invasion of Egypt was known, had called upon ‘all true believers to take arms against those swinish infidels the French, that they might deliver these blessed habitations from their accursed hands;’ and who had ordered his ‘pashas to turn night into day in their efforts to take vengeance.’ The present of ‘his imperial majesty, the powerful, formidable, and most magnificent Grand Seignior,’ was a pelisse of sables, with broad sleeves, valued at five thousand dollars; and a diamond aigrette, valued at eighteen thousand—the most honourable badge among the Turks; and in this instance more especially honourable, because it was taken from one of the royal turbans. ‘If it were worth a million,’ said Nelson to his wife, ‘my pleasure would be to see it in your possession.’ The Sultan also sent, in a spirit worthy of imitation, a purse of two thousand sequins, to be distributed among the wounded. The mother of the Sultan sent him a box, set with diamonds, valued at £1000. The Czar Paul, in whom the better part of his strangely compounded nature at this time predominated, presented him with his portrait, set in diamonds, in a gold box, accompanied with a letter of congratulation, written by his own hand. The King of Sardinia also wrote to him, and sent a gold box, set with diamonds. Honours in profusion were awaiting him at Naples. In his own country he was created Baron Nelson of the Nile and of Burnham-Thorpe, with a pension of £2000 for his own life, and those of his two immediate successors. When

the grant was moved in the House of Commons, General Walpole expressed an opinion, that a higher degree of rank ought to be conferred. Mr Pitt made answer, that he thought it needless to enter into that question. ‘Admiral Nelson’s fame,’ he said, ‘would be co-equal with the British name: and it would be remembered that he had obtained the greatest naval victory on record, when no man would think of asking whether he had been created a baron, a viscount, or an earl!’

Whatever may have been the motives of the ministry, and whatever the formalities with which they excused their conduct to themselves, the importance and magnitude of the victory were universally acknowledged. A grant of £10,000 was voted to Nelson by the East India Company; the Turkish Company presented him with a piece of plate; the city of London presented a sword to him, and to each of his captains; gold medals were distributed to the captains; and the first lieutenants of all the ships were promoted, as had been done after Lord Howe’s victory.

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## CHAPTER VI.

NELSON’s health had suffered greatly while he was in the *Agamemnon*. ‘My complaint,’ he said, ‘is as if a girth were buckled taut over my breast; and my endeavour in the night is to get it loose.’ After the battle off Cape St Vincent, he felt a little rest to be so essential to his recovery, that he declared he would not continue to serve longer than the ensuing summer, unless it should be absolutely necessary; for, in his own strong language, he had then been four years and nine months without one moment’s repose for body or mind. A few months’ intermission of labour he had obtained—not of rest, for it was purchased with the loss of a limb; and the greater part of the time had been a season of constant pain. As soon as his shattered frame had sufficiently recovered for him to resume his duties, he was called to services of greater importance than any on which he had hitherto been employed, and they brought with them commensurate fatigue and care.

The anxiety which he endured during his long pursuit of the enemy was rather changed in its direction, than abated, by their defeat: and this constant wakefulness of thought, added to the effect of his wound, and the exertions from which it was not possible for one of so ardent and wide-reaching a mind to spare himself, nearly proved fatal. On his way back to Italy he was seized with fever. For eighteen hours his life was despaired of; and even when the disorder took a favourable turn, and he was so far recovered as again to appear on deck, he himself thought that his end was approaching—such was the weakness to which the fever and cough had reduced him. Writing to Earl St Vincent, on the passage, he said to him, 'I never expect, my dear lord, to see your face again. It may please God that this will be the finish to that fever of anxiety which I have endured from the middle of June; but be that as it pleases His goodness. I am resigned to His will.'

Early on the 22nd of September the poor, wretched *Vanguard*, as he called his shattered vessel, appeared in sight of Naples. The *Culloden* and *Alexander* had preceded her by some days, and given notice of her approach. Many hundred boats and barges were ready to go forth and meet him, with music and streamers, and every demonstration of joy and triumph. Sir William and Lady Hamilton led the way in their state barge, and the king, who went out to meet him three leagues in the royal barge, came on board and took him by the hand, calling him his deliverer and preserver; from all the boats around he was saluted with the same appellations; the multitude who surrounded him when he landed, repeated the same enthusiastic cries; and the *lazzaroni* displayed their joy by holding up birds in cages, and giving them their liberty as he passed.

His birthday, which occurred a week after his arrival, was celebrated with one of the most splendid *fêtes* ever beheld at Naples.

The battle of the Nile shook the power of France. Her most successful general, and her finest army, were blocked up in Egypt—hopeless, as it appeared, of return; and the government was in the hands of men without talents, without character, and divided among themselves. Austria, whom Bonaparte had terrified into a peace, at a time when constancy on her part

would probably have led to his destruction, took advantage of the crisis to renew the war. Russia also was preparing to enter the field with unbroken forces; led by a general whose extraordinary military genius would have entitled him to a high and honourable rank in history, if it had not been sullied by all the ferocity of a barbarian. Naples, seeing its destruction at hand, and thinking that the only means of averting it was by meeting the danger, after long vacillations, which were produced by the fears, and weakness, and treachery of its council, agreed at last to join this new coalition, with a numerical force of 80,000 men. Nelson told the king, in plain terms, that he had his choice, either to advance, trusting to God for His blessing on a just cause, and prepared to die sword in hand—or to remain quiet, and be kicked out of his kingdom:—one of these things must happen.

Nelson's first object was the recovery of Malta—an island which the King of Naples pretended to claim. The Maltese, whom the villainous knights of their order had betrayed to France, had taken up arms against their rapacious invaders, with a spirit and unanimity worthy of the highest praise. They blockaded the French garrison by land, and a small squadron, under Captain Ball, began to blockade them by sea, on the 12th of October. Twelve days afterwards Nelson arrived, and the little island of Gozo, dependent upon Malta, which had also been seized and garrisoned by the French, capitulated soon after his arrival, and was taken possession of by the British, in the name of his Sicilian Majesty—a power who had no better claim to it than France. Having seen this effected, and reinforced Captain Ball, he left that able officer to perform a most arduous and important part, and returned himself to co-operate with the intended movements of the Neapolitan.

General Mack was at the head of the Neapolitan troops. All that is now doubtful concerning this man is whether he was a coward or a traitor. At that time he was assiduously extolled as a most consummate commander, to whom Europe might look for deliverance; and when he was introduced by the king and queen to the British admiral, the queen said to him, 'Be to us by land, general, what my hero Nelson has been by sea.' Mack, on his part, did not fail to praise the force which he was ap-

pointed to command. 'It was,' he said, 'the finest army in Europe.' Nelson agreed with him, that there could not be finer men; but when the general, at a review, so directed the operations of a mock-fight, that, by an unhappy blunder, his own troops were surrounded instead of those of the enemy, he turned to his friends and exclaimed, with bitterness, that the fellow did not understand his business. Another circumstance, not less characteristic, confirmed Nelson in his judgment. 'General Mack,' said he, in one of his letters, 'cannot move without five carriages! I have formed my opinion. I heartily pray I may be mistaken.'

While Mack, at the head of 32,000 men, marched into the Roman state, 5000 Neapolitans were embarked on board the British and Portuguese squadron, to take possession of Leghorn. This was effected without opposition; and the Grand Duke of Tuscany, whose neutrality had been so outrageously violated by the French, was better satisfied with the measure than some of the Neapolitans themselves. Naselli, their general, refused to seize the French vessels at Leghorn, because he and the Duke di Sangro, who was ambassador at the Tuscan court, maintained that the King of Naples was not at war with France. 'What!' said Nelson, 'has not the king received, as a conquest made by him, the republican flag taken at Gozo? Is not his own flag flying there, and at Malta, not only by his permission, but by his order? Is not his flag shot at every day by the French, and their shot returned from batteries which bear that flag? Are not two frigates and a corvette placed under my orders ready to fight the French, meet them where they may? Has not the king sent publicly from Naples, guns, mortars, &c., with officers and artillery, against the French in Malta? If these acts are not tantamount to any written paper, I give up all knowledge of what is war.' This reasoning was of less avail than argument addressed to the general's fears. Nelson told him, that if he permitted the many hundred French who were then in the mole to remain neutral, till they had a fair opportunity of being active, they had one sure resource, if all other schemes failed, which was, to set one vessel on fire; the mole would be destroyed, probably the town also; and the port ruined for twenty years. It was in vain to hope for anything vigorous

or manly from such men as Nelson was compelled to act with. The crews of the French ships and their allies were ordered to depart in two days. Four days elapsed, and nobody obeyed the order; nor, in spite of the representations of the British minister, Mr Wyndham, were any means taken to enforce it:—the true Neapolitan shuffle, as Nelson called it, took place on all occasions. After an absence of ten days, he returned to Naples: and receiving intelligence there, from Mr Wyndham, that the privateers were at last to be disarmed, the corn landed, and the crews sent away, he expressed his satisfaction at the news in characteristic language, saying, ‘So far I am content. The enemy will be distressed; and, thank God, I shall get no money. The world, I know, think that money is our god; and now they will be undeceived, as far as relates to us.’

• Odes, sonnets, and congratulatory poems of every description, were poured in upon Nelson, on his arrival at Naples. An Irish Franciscan, who was one of the poets, not being contented with panegyric, upon this occasion ventured upon a flight of prophecy, and predicted that Lord Nelson would take Rome with his ships. His lordship reminded Father M‘Cormick that ships could not ascend the Tiber: but the father, who had probably forgotten this circumstance, met the objection with a bold front, and declared he saw that it would come to pass notwithstanding. Rejoicings of this kind were of short duration. The King of Naples was with the army which had entered Rome; but the castle of St Angelo was held by the French, and 13,000 French were strongly posted in the Roman states at Castallana. Mack had marched against them with 20,000 men. Nelson saw that the event was doubtful;—or rather, that there could be very little hope of the result. But the immediate fate of Naples, as he well knew, hung upon the issue. ‘If Mack is defeated,’ said he, ‘in fourteen days this country is lost; for the emperor has not yet moved his army, and Naples has not the power of resisting the enemy.’

His fears were soon verified. ‘The Neapolitan officers,’ said Nelson, ‘did not lose much honour, for they had not much to lose;—but they lost all they had.’ General St Philip commanded the right wing, of 19,000 men. He fell in with 3000 of the enemy; and, as soon as he came near enough, deserted

to them. One of his men had virtue enough to level a musket at him, and shot him through the arm; but the wound was not sufficient to prevent him from joining with the French in pursuit of his own countrymen. Cannon, tents, baggage, and military chest, were all forsaken by the runaways, though they lost only forty men: for the French, having put them to flight, and got possession of everything, did not pursue an army of more than three times their own number. The main body of the Neapolitans, under Mack, did not behave better. The king returned to Naples; where every day brought with it the tidings of some new disgrace from the army, and the discovery of some new treachery at home; till four days after his return, the general sent him advice, that there was no prospect of stopping the progress of the enemy, and that the royal family must look to their own personal safety.

On the night of the 21st of December Nelson landed, brought out the whole royal family, embarked them in three barges, and carried them safely, through a tremendous sea, to the *Vanguard*; on the 23rd, the fleet sailed; and, on the 26th, the royal family were landed at Palermo.

The King of Sardinia, finding it impossible longer to endure the exactions of France, and the insults of the French commissary, went to Leghorn, embarked on board a Danish frigate, and sailed, under British protection, to Sardinia—that part of his dominions which the maritime supremacy of England rendered a secure asylum. Tuscany was soon occupied by French troops. Nelson began to fear even for Sicily. ‘Oh, my dear sir,’ said he, writing to Commodore Duckworth, ‘one thousand English troops would save Messina,—and I fear General Stuart cannot give me men to save this most important island!’ But his representations were not lost upon Sir Charles Stuart: this officer hastened immediately from Minorca, with a thousand men, assisted in the measures of defence which were taken, and did not return before he had satisfied himself that, if the Neapolitans were excluded from the management of affairs, and the spirit of the peasantry properly directed, Sicily was safe. Before his coming, Nelson had offered the king, if no resources should arrive, to defend Messina with the ship’s company of an English man-of-war.

Russia had now entered into the war. Corfu surrendered to a Russian and Turkish fleet, acting now, for the first time, in strange confederacy; yet against a power which was certainly the common and worst enemy of both. Trowbridge, having given up the blockade of Alexandria to Sir Sydney Smith, joined Nelson, bringing with him a considerable addition of strength; and in himself, what Nelson valued more, a man upon whose sagacity, indefatigable zeal, and inexhaustible resources, he could place full reliance. Trowbridge was instructed to commence the operations against the French in the bay of Naples. Meantime, Cardinal Ruffo, a man of questionable character, but of a temper fitted for such times, having landed in Calabria, raised what he called a Christian army, composed of the best and the vilest materials; loyal peasants, enthusiastic priests and friars, galley slaves, the emptying of the jails, and banditti. The islands in the bay of Naples were joyfully delivered up by the inhabitants, who were in a state of famine already, from the effect of this baleful revolution. Trowbridge distributed among them all his flour; and Nelson pressed the Sicilian court incessantly for supplies; telling them, that £10,000 given away in provisions would, at this time, purchase a kingdom. Money, he was told, they had not to give; and the wisdom and integrity which might have supplied its want were not to be found. 'There is nothing,' said he, 'which I propose that is not, as far as orders go, implicitly complied with: but the execution is dreadful, and almost makes me mad. My desire to serve their majesties faithfully, as in my duty, has been such, that I am almost blind and worn out; and cannot, in my present state, hold much longer.'

About this time intelligence arrived that the French fleet had escaped from Brest, under cover of a fog, passed Cadiz unseen by Lord Keith's squadron, in hazy weather, and entered the Mediterranean. It was said to consist of twenty-four sail of the line, six frigates, and three sloops. The object of the French was to liberate the Spanish fleet, form a junction with them, act against Minorca and Sicily, and overpower our naval force in the Mediterranean, by falling in with detached squadrons, and thus destroying it in detail. When they arrived off Cartagena, they requested the Spanish ships to make sail and join;

but the Spaniards replied, they had not men to man them. To this it was answered, that the French had men enough on board for that purpose. But the Spaniards seem to have been apprehensive of delivering up their ships thus entirely into the power of such allies, and refused to come out. The fleet from Cadiz, however, consisting of from seventeen to twenty sail of the line, got out; but met with a violent storm off the coast of Oran, which dismasted many of their ships, and so effectually disabled them, as to prevent the junction, and frustrate a well-planned expedition.

Before this occurred, and while the junction was as probable as it would have been formidable, Nelson was in a state of the greatest anxiety. 'What a state am I in!' said he to Earl St Vincent. 'If I go, I risk, and more than risk, Sicily: for we know, from experience, that more depends upon opinion than upon acts themselves: and as I stay, my heart is breaking.' His first business was to summon Trowbridge to join him, with all the ships of the line under his command, and a frigate, if possible. Then hearing that the French had entered the Mediterranean, and expecting them at Palermo, where he had only his own ship, with that single ship he prepared to make all the resistance possible. Trowbridge having joined him, he left Captain E. J. Foote, of the *Seahorse*, to command the smaller vessels in the bay of Naples, and sailed with six ships; one a Portuguese, and a Portuguese corvette; telling Earl St Vincent that the squadron should never fall into the hands of the enemy. 'And before we are destroyed,' said he, 'I have little doubt but they will have their wings so completely clipped, that they may be easily overtaken.'

While he sailed from Palermo, with the intention of collecting his whole force, and keeping off Maretimo, either to receive reinforcements there, if the French were bound upwards, or to hasten to Minorca, if that should be their destination, Captain Foote, in the *Seahorse*, with the Neapolitan frigates and some small vessels under his command, was left to act with a land force consisting of a few regular troops, of four different nations, and with the armed rabble which Cardinal Ruffo called the Christian army. His directions were, to co-operate to the utmost of his power with royalists, at whose head Ruffo had

been placed ; and he had no other instructions whatever. Ruffo advancing, without any plan, but relying upon the enemy's want of numbers, which prevented them from attempting to act upon the offensive, and ready to take advantage of any accident which might occur, approached Naples. Fort St Elmo, which commands the town, was wholly garrisoned by the French troops ; Ruffo proposed to the garrison to capitulate, on condition that their persons and property should be guaranteed, and that they should, at their own option, either be sent to Toulon or remain at Naples, without being molested either in their persons or families. This capitulation was accepted : it was signed by the cardinal, and the Russian and Turkish commanders ; and, lastly, by Captain Foote, as commander of the British force. About six-and-thirty hours afterwards Nelson arrived in the bay, with a force, which had joined him during his cruise, consisting of seventeen sail of the line, with 1700 troops on board, and the prince-royal of Naples in the admiral's ship. A flag of truce was flying on the castles, and on board the *Seahorse*. Nelson made a signal to annul the treaty, declaring that he would grant rebels no other terms than those of unconditional submission. Captain Foote was sent out of the bay ; and the garrisons, taken out of the castles, under pretence of carrying the treaty into effect, were delivered over as rebels to the vengeance of the Sicilian court.—A deplorable transaction ! a stain upon the memory of Nelson, and the honour of England.

The castles of St Elmo, Gaieta, and Capua, remained to be subdued. On the land side, there was no danger that the French in these garrisons should be relieved, for Suvarof was now beginning to drive the enemy before him ; but Nelson thought his presence necessary in the bay of Naples : and when Lord Keith, having received intelligence that the French and Spanish fleets had formed a junction, and sailed for Carthagena, ordered him to repair to Minorca, with the whole or the greater part of his force, he sent Admiral Duckworth with a small part only.

Nelson was right in his judgment : no attempt was made upon Minorca ; and the expulsion of the French from Naples may rather be said to have been effected, than accelerated, by

the English and Portuguese of the allied fleet, acting upon shore, under Trowbridge.

The Admiralty, however, thought it expedient to censure him for disobeying Lord Keith's orders, and thus hazarding Minorca, without, as it appeared to them, any sufficient reason ; and also for having landed seamen for the siege of Capua, to form part of an army employed in operations at a distance from the coast ; where, in case of defeat, they might have been prevented from returning to their ships ; and they enjoined him 'not to employ the seamen in like manner in future.' This reprimand was issued before the event was known ; though, indeed, the event would not affect the principle upon which it proceeded. When Nelson communicated the tidings of his complete success he said, in his public letter 'that it would not be the less acceptable for having been principally brought about by British sailors.' His judgment in thus employing them had been justified by the result ; and his joy was evidently heightened by the gratification of a professional and becoming pride. To the First Lord he said, at the same time, 'I certainly, from having only a left hand, cannot enter into details which may explain the motives that actuated my conduct. I feel that I am fitter to do the action than to describe it.' He then added, that he would take care of Minorca.

The Sicilian court were at this time duly sensible of the services which had been rendered them by the British fleet, and their gratitude to Nelson was shown with proper and princely munificence. They gave him the dukedom and domain of Bronte, worth about £3000 a-year. It was some days before he could be persuaded to accept it. The king is said to have addressed him in words which show that the sense of rank will sometimes confer a virtue upon those who seem to be most unworthy of the lot to which they have been born : 'Lord Nelson, do you wish that your name alone should pass with honour to posterity ; and that I, Ferdinand Bourbon, should appear ungrateful ?' He gave him also, when the dukedom was accepted, a diamond-hilted sword, which his father, Charles III. of Spain, had given him on his accession to the throne of the Two Sicilies. Nelson said, 'The reward was magnificent, and worthy of a king, and he was determined that

the inhabitants on the domain should be the happiest in all his Sicilian Majesty's dominions. Yet,' said he, speaking of these and the other remunerations which were made him for his services, 'these presents, rich as they are, do not elevate me. My pride is that at Constantinople, from the grand seignior to the lowest Turk, the name of Nelson is familiar in their mouths ; and in this country I am everything which a grateful monarch and people can call me.' Nelson, however, had a pardonable pride in the outward and visible signs of honour which he had so fairly won. He was fond of his Sicilian title ; the signification, perhaps, pleased him ;—Duke of Thunder was what in Dahomy would be called a *strong name* ; it was to a sailor's taste ; and, certainly, to no man could it ever be more applicable. But a simple offering, which he received not long afterwards, from the island of Zante, affected him with a deeper and finer feeling. The Greeks of that little community sent him a golden-headed sword, and a truncheon, set round with all the diamonds that the island could furnish, in a single row. They thanked him 'for having, by his victory, preserved that part of Greece from the horrors of anarchy ; and prayed that his exploits might accelerate the day in which, amidst the glory and peace of thrones, the miseries of the human race would cease.'

Nelson perceived that no object was now so essential for the tranquillity of Naples as the recovery of Rome ; which, in the present state of things, when Suvarof was driving the French before him, would complete the deliverance of Italy. He applied, therefore, to Sir James St Clair Erskine, who, in the absence of General Fox, commanded at Minorca, to assist in this great object with twelve hundred men. 'The field of glory,' said he, 'is a large one, and was never more open to any one than at this moment to you. Rome would throw open her gates, and receive you as her deliverer : and the Pope would owe his restoration to a heretic.' But Sir James Erskine looked only at the difficulties of the undertaking. 'Twelve hundred men,' he thought, 'would be too small a force to be committed in such an enterprise ; for Civita Vecchia was a regular fortress.'

What this general thought it imprudent to attempt, Nelson and Trowbridge effected, without his assistance, by a small detachment from the fleet.

Having thus completed his work upon the continent of Italy, Nelson's whole attention was directed towards Malta, where Captain Ball, with most inadequate means, was besieging the French garrison. The garrison consisted of five thousand troops; the besieging force of five hundred English and Portuguese marines, and about fifteen hundred armed peasants. Long and repeatedly did Nelson solicit troops to effect the reduction of this important place. 'It has been no fault of the navy,' said he, 'that Malta has not been attacked by land; but we have neither the means ourselves, nor influence with those who have.' Sir James Erskine was expecting General Fox; he could not act without orders; and not having, like Nelson, that lively spring of hope within him, which partakes though of the nature of faith to work miracles in war, he thought it 'evident that unless a respectable land force, in numbers sufficient to undertake the siege of such a garrison, in one of the strongest places of Europe, and supplied with proportionate artillery and stores, were sent against it, no reasonable hope could be entertained of its surrender.'

At length General Fox arrived at Minorca, and, at length, permitted Colonel Graham to go to Malta, but with means miserably limited. In fact, the expedition was at a stand for want of money; when Trowbridge arriving at Messina, to co-operate in it, and finding this fresh delay, immediately offered all that he could command of his own. 'I procured him, my lord,' said he to Nelson, 'fifteen thousand of my cobs: every farthing, and every atom of me shall be devoted to the cause.' 'What can this mean?' said Nelson, when he learnt that Colonel Graham was ordered not to incur any expense for stores, or any articles except provisions,—'the cause cannot stand still for want of a little money. If nobody will pay it, I will sell Bronte, and the Emperor of Russia's box.' And he actually pledged Bronte for £6600, if there should be any difficulty about paying the bills. The long-delayed expedition was thus, at last, set forth; but Trowbridge little imagined in what scenes of misery he was to bear his part. He looked to Sicily for supplies; it was the interest, as well as the duty of the Sicilian government, to use every exertion for furnishing them; and Nelson and the British ambassador were on the spot to

press upon them the necessity of exertion. But though Nelson saw with what a knavish crew the Sicilian court was surrounded, he was blind to the vices of the court itself, and never even suspected the crooked policy which it was remorselessly pursuing. He begged, almost on his knees, he said, small supplies of money and corn, to keep the Maltese from starving. And when the court granted a small supply, protesting their poverty, he believed their protestations, and was satisfied with their professions, instead of insisting that the restrictions upon the exportation of corn should be withdrawn. Captain Ball, with more decision than Nelson himself would have shown at that time and upon that occasion, ventured upon a resolute measure, for which his name would deserve always to be held in veneration by the Maltese, even if it had no other claims to the love and reverence of a grateful people. Finding it hopeless longer to look for succour or common humanity from the deceitful and infatuated court of Sicily, which persisted in prohibiting, by sanguinary edicts, the exportation of supplies, at his own risk he sent his first lieutenant to the port of Messina, with orders to seize, and bring with him to Malta, the ships which were there lying laden with corn, of the number of which he had received accurate information. These orders were executed to the great delight and advantage of the ship-owners and proprietors ; the necessity of raising the siege was removed, and Captain Ball waited in calmness for the consequences to himself. 'But,' said Mr Coleridge, 'not a complaint, not a murmur, proceeded from the court of Naples : the sole result was, that the governor of Malta became an especial object of its hatred, its fear, and its respect.'

Nelson himself, at the beginning of February, sailed for that island. On the way he fell in with a French squadron bound for its relief, and consisting of the *Generous*, seventy-four, three frigates, and a corvette. One of these frigates and the line-of-battle ship were taken ; the others escaped, but failed in their purpose of reaching La Valette. This success was peculiarly gratifying to Nelson for many reasons. During some months he had acted as commander-in-chief in the Mediterranean, while Lord Keith was in England. Lord Keith was now returned, and Nelson had, upon his own plan and at his own

risk, left him, to sail for Malta : 'for which,' said he, 'if I had not succeeded, I might have been broke; and if I had not acted thus, the *Genereux* never would have been taken.' This ship was one of those which had escaped from Aboukir. Two frigates and the *Guillaume Tell*, eighty-six, were all that now remained of the fleet which Bonaparte had conducted to Egypt. The *Guillaume Tell* was at this time closely watched in the harbour of La Valette; and shortly afterwards, attempting to make her escape from thence, was taken, after an action in which greater skill was never displayed by British ships, nor greater gallantry by an enemy. Nelson, rejoicing at what he called this glorious finish to the whole French Mediterranean fleet, rejoiced also that he was not present to have taken a sprig of these brave men's laurels. 'They are,' said he, 'and I glory in them, my children; they served in my school; and all of us caught our professional zeal and fire from the great and good Earl St Vincent. What a pleasure, what happiness, to have the Nile fleet all taken under my orders and regulations!' The two frigates still remained in La Valette; before its surrender they stole out; one was taken in the attempt, the other was the only ship of the whole fleet which escaped capture or destruction.

Letters were found on board the *Guillaume Tell* showing that the French were now become hopeless of preserving the conquest which they had so foully acquired. Trowbridge and his brother officers were anxious that Nelson should have the honour of signing the capitulation. They told him that they absolutely, as far as they dared, insisted on his staying to do this; but their earnest and affectionate entreaties were vain. Sir William Hamilton had just been superseded; Nelson had no feeling of cordiality towards Lord Keith; and thinking that, after Earl St Vincent, no man had so good a claim to the command in the Mediterranean as himself, he applied for permission to return to England; telling the First Lord of the Admiralty, that his spirit could not submit patiently, and that he was a broken-hearted man.

A ship could not be spared to convey him to England; he, therefore, travelled through Germany to Hamburg, in company with his friends, Sir William and Lady Hamilton.

The Queen of Naples went with them to Vienna. While they were at Leghorn, upon a report that the French were approaching (for, through the folly of weak courts, and the treachery of venal cabinets, they had now recovered their ascendancy in Italy), the people rose tumultuously, and would fain have persuaded Nelson to lead them against the enemy. Public honours, and yet more gratifying testimonials of public admiration, awaited Nelson wherever he went. The Prince of Esterhazy entertained him in a style of Hungarian magnificence—a hundred grenadiers, each six feet in height, constantly waiting at table. At Magdeburg, the master of the hotel where he was entertained, contrived to show him for money; admitting the curious to mount a ladder, and peep at him through a small window. A German pastor, between seventy and eighty years of age, travelled forty miles, with the Bible of his parish church, to request that Nelson would write his name on the first leaf of it. He called him the saviour of the Christian world. The old man's hope deceived him. There was no Nelson upon shore, or Europe would have been saved; but, in his foresight of the horrors with which all Germany and all Christendom were threatened by France, the pastor could not possibly have apprehended more than has actually taken place.

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## CHAPTER VII.

NELSON was welcomed in England with every mark of popular honour. At Yarmouth, where he landed, every ship in the harbour hoisted her colours. The mayor and corporation waited upon him with the freedom of the town, and accompanied him in procession to church, with all the naval officers on shore, and the principal inhabitants. Bonfires and illuminations concluded the day; and, on the morrow, the volunteer cavalry drew up and saluted him as he departed, and followed the carriage to the borders of the county. At Ipswich, the

people came out to meet him, drew him a mile into the town and three miles out. When he was in the *Agamemnon*, he wished to represent this place in parliament, and some of his friends had consulted the leading men of the corporation ; the result was not successful : and Nelson observing that he would endeavour to find out a preferable path into parliament, said there might come a time when the people of Ipswich would think it an honour to have had him for their representative. In London, he was feasted by the city, drawn by the populace from Ludgate Hill to Guildhall, and received the thanks of the common council for his great victory, and a golden-hilted sword studded with diamonds.

The Addington administration was just at this time formed ; and Nelson, who had solicited employment, and been made vice-admiral of the blue, was sent to the Baltic, as second in command, under Sir Hyde Parker, by Earl St Vincent, the new First Lord of the Admiralty. The three northern courts had formed a confederacy for making England resign her naval rights. Of these courts Russia was guided by the passions of its emperor, Paul, a man not without fits of generosity, and some natural goodness, but subject to the wildest humours of caprice, and crazed by the possession of greater power than can ever be safely, or perhaps innocently, possessed by weak humanity. Denmark was French at heart ; ready to co-operate in all the views of France, to recognise all her usurpations, and obey all her injunctions. Sweden, under a king whose principles were right, and whose feelings were generous, but who had a taint of hereditary insanity, acted in acquiescence with the dictates of two powers whom it feared to offend. Such a combination, under the influence of France, would soon have become formidable ; and never did the British cabinet display more decision than in instantly preparing to crush it. They erred, however, in permitting any petty consideration to prevent them from appointing Nelson to the command. The public properly murmured at seeing it entrusted to another : and he himself said to Earl St Vincent, that, circumstanced as he was, this expedition would probably be the last service that he should ever perform. The Earl, in reply, besought him not

to suffer himself to be carried away by any sudden impulse.

The season happened to be unusually favourable; so mild a winter had not been known in the Baltic for many years. When Nelson joined the fleet at Yarmouth, he found the admiral 'a little nervous about dark nights and fields of ice.'—'But we must brace up,' said he; 'these are not times for nervous systems.—I hope we shall give our northern enemies that hailstorm of bullets, which gives our dear country the dominion of the sea.'

The fleet sailed on the 12th of March. Mr Vansittart sailed in it; the British cabinet still hoping to obtain its end by negotiation. It was well for England that Sir Hyde Parker placed a fuller confidence in Nelson than the Government seems to have done at this most important crisis. Her enemies might well have been astonished at learning that any other man should for a moment have been thought of for the command. But so little deference was paid, even at this time, to his intuitive and all-commanding genius, that when the fleet had reached its first rendezvous, at the entrance of the Cattegat, he had received no official communication whatever of the intended operations. His own mind had been made up upon them with its accustomed decision. 'All I have gathered of our last plans,' said he, 'I disapprove most exceedingly. Honour may arise from them; good cannot. I hear we are likely to anchor outside of Cronenburg Castle, instead of Copenhagen, which would give weight to our negotiation. A Danish minister would think twice before he would put his name to war with England, when the next moment he would probably see his master's fleet in flames, and his capital in ruins. The Dane should see our flag every moment he lifted up his head.'

Mr Vansittart left the fleet at the Scaw, and preceded it in a frigate, with a flag of truce. Precious time was lost by this delay, which was to be purchased by the dearest blood of Britain and Denmark: according to the Danes themselves, the intelligence that a British fleet was seen off the Sound produced a much more general alarm in Copenhagen than its actual arrival in the roads; for their means of defence were, at that time in

such a state, that they could hardly hope to resist, still less to repel, an enemy. On the 21st, Nelson had a long conference with Sir Hyde ; and the next day addressed a letter to him worthy of himself and of the occasion. Mr Vansittart's report had then been received. It represented the Danish government as in the highest degree hostile ; and their state of preparation as exceeding what our cabinet had supposed possible ; for Denmark had profited, with all activity, of the leisure which had so impolitely been given her. 'The more I have reflected,' said Nelson to his commander, 'the more I am confirmed in opinion, that not a moment should be lost in attacking the enemy. They will every day and every hour be stronger : we shall never be so good a match for them as at this moment. The only consideration is, how to get at them with the least risk to our ships.—Here you are, with almost the safety—certainly with the honour—of England, more entrusted to you than ever yet fell to the lot of any British officer. On your decision depends whether our country shall be degraded in the eyes of Europe, or whether she shall rear her head higher than ever. Again I do repeat, never did our country depend so much upon the success of any fleet as on this. How best to honour her, and abate the pride of her enemies, must be the subject of your deepest consideration.'

Supposing him to force the passage of the Sound, Nelson thought some damage might be done among the masts and yards ; though, perhaps, not one of them but would be serviceable again. 'If the wind be fair,' said he, 'and you determine to attack the ships and Crown Islands, you must expect the natural issue of such a battle—ships crippled, and, perhaps, one or two lost ; for the wind which carries you in will most probably not bring out a crippled ship. This mode I call taking the bull by the horns. It, however, will not prevent the Revel ships, or the Swedes, from joining the Danes : and to prevent this is, in my humble opinion, a measure absolutely necessary ; and still to attack Copenhagen.' For this he proposed two modes. One was, to pass Cronenburg, taking the risk of danger ; take the deepest and straightest channel along the Middle Grounds ; and then, coming down the Garbar, or King's Channel, attack the Danish line of floating batteries and ships, as

might be found convenient. This would prevent a junction, and might give an opportunity of bombarding Copenhagen. Or to take the passage of the Belt, which might be accomplished in four or five days ; and then the attack by Draco might be made, and the junction of the Russians prevented. Supposing them through the Belt, he proposed that a detachment of the fleet should be sent to destroy the Russian squadron at Revel ; and that the business at Copenhagen should be attempted with the remainder. 'The measure,' he said, 'might be thought bold ; but the boldest measures are the safest.'

The pilots, as men who had nothing but safety to think of, were terrified by the formidable report of the batteries of Elsinør, and the tremendous preparations which our negotiators, who were now returned from their fruitless mission, had witnessed. They, therefore, persuaded Sir Hyde to prefer the passage of the Belt. 'Let it be by the Sound, by the Belt, or any how,' cried Nelson, 'only lose not an hour !' On the 26th they sailed for the Belt : such was the habitual reserve of Sir Hyde that his own captain—the captain of the fleet—did not know which course he had resolved to take till the fleet were getting under weigh. When Captain Domett was thus apprised of it, he felt it his duty to represent to the admiral his belief that, if that course were persevered in, the ultimate object would be totally defeated : it was liable to long delays, and to accidents of ships grounding ; in the whole fleet there were only one captain and one pilot who knew anything of this formidable passage (as it was then deemed), and their knowledge was very slight : their instructions did not authorize them to attempt it ;—supposing them safe through the Belts, the heavy ships could not come over the *Grounds* to attack Copenhagen, and light vessels would have no effect on such a line of defence as had been prepared against them. Domett urged these reasons so forcibly that Sir Hyde's opinion was shaken, and he consented to bring the fleet to, and send for Nelson on board. There can be little doubt but that the expedition would have failed, if Captain Domett had not thus timely and earnestly given his advice. Nelson entirely agreed with him ; and it was finally determined to take the passage of the Sound—and the fleet returned to its former anchorage.

The next day was more idly expended in despatching a flag of truce to the governor of Cronenburg Castle, to ask whether he had received orders to fire at the British fleet ; as the admiral must consider the first gun to be a declaration of war on the part of Denmark. A soldier-like and becoming answer was returned to this formality. The governor said, that the British minister had not been sent away from Copenhagen, but had obtained a passport at his own demand. He himself, as a soldier, could not meddle with politics : but he was not at liberty to suffer a fleet, of which the intention was not yet known, to approach the guns of the castle which he had the honour to command : and he requested, if the British admiral should think proper to make any proposals to the King of Denmark, that he might be apprised of it before the fleet approached nearer. During this intercourse, a Dane, who came on board the commander's ship, having occasion to express his business in writing, found the pen blunt ; and, holding it up, sarcastically said, 'If your guns are not better pointed than your pens, you will make little impression on Copenhagen !'

On that day intelligence reached the admiral of the loss of one of his fleet, the *Invincible*, seventy-four, wrecked on a sand-bank, as she was coming out of Yarmouth : 400 of her men perished in her. Nelson, who was now appointed to lead the van, shifted his flag to the *Elephant*, Captain Foley—a lighter ship than the *St George*, and, therefore, fitter for the expected operations. The two following days were calm. Orders had been given to pass the Sound as soon as the wind would permit ; and, on the afternoon of the 29th, the ships were cleared for action with an alacrity characteristic of British seamen. At daybreak, on the 30th, it blew a topsail breeze from N.W. The signal was made, and the fleet moved on in order of battle ; Nelson's division in the van, Sir Hyde's in the centre, and Admiral Grave's in the rear.

The whole force consisted of fifty-one sail of various descriptions, of which sixteen were of the line. The greater part of the bomb and gun-vessels took their stations off Cronenburg Castle, to cover the fleet, while others on the larboard were ready to engage the Swedish shore. The Danes, having improved every moment which ill-timed negotiation and baffling

weather gave them, had lined their shore with batteries ; and as soon as the *Monarch*, which was the leading ship, came abreast of them, a fire was opened from about a hundred pieces of cannon and mortars ; our light vessels immediately, in return, opened their fire upon the castle. The enemy's shot fell near enough to splash the water on board our ships : not relying upon any forbearance of the Swedes, they meant to have kept the mid-channel, but when they perceived that not a shot was fired from Helsingburg, and that no batteries were to be seen on the Swedish shore, they inclined to that side, so as completely to get out of reach of the Danish guns. The uninterrupted blaze which was kept up from them till the fleet had passed served only to exhilarate our sailors and afford them matter for jest, as the shot fell in showers a full cable's length short of its destined aim. A few rounds were returned from some of our leading ships till they perceived its inutility :—this, however, occasioned the only bloodshed of the day, some of our men being killed and wounded by the bursting of a gun. As soon as the main body had passed, the gun-vessels followed, desisting from their bombardment, which had been as innocent as that of the enemy ; and, about mid-day, the whole fleet anchored between the island of Huen and Copenhagen. Sir Hyde, with Nelson, Admiral Graves, some of the senior captains, and the commanding officers of the artillery and the troops, then proceeded in a lugger to reconnoitre the enemy's means of defence ; a formidable line of ships, radeaus, pontoons, galleys, fire-ships, and gun-boats, flanked and supported by extensive batteries, and occupying, from one extreme point to the other, an extent of nearly four miles.

A council of war was held in the afternoon. It was apparent that the Danes could not be attacked without great difficulty and risk ; and some of the members of the council spoke of the number of the Swedes and Russians whom they should afterwards have to engage, as a consideration which ought to be borne in mind. Nelson, who kept pacing the cabin, impatient as he ever was of anything which savoured of irresolution, repeatedly said, ‘The more numerous the better : I wish they were twice as many,—the easier the victory, depend on it.’ The plan upon which he had determined if ever it should be his fortune to bring a Baltic fleet to action, was to attack the head

of their line and confuse their movements.—‘Close with a Frenchman,’ he used to say, ‘but out-maneuvre a Russian. He offered his services for the attack, requiring ten sail of the line, and the whole of the smaller craft. Sir Hyde gave him two more line-of-battle ships than he asked, and left everything to his judgment.

The enemy’s force was not the only, nor the greatest, obstacle with which the British fleet had to contend : there was another to be overcome before they could come in contact with it. The channel was little known and extremely intricate ; all the buoys had been removed ; and the Danes considered this difficulty as almost insuperable, thinking the channel impracticable for so large a fleet. Nelson himself saw the soundings made, and the buoys laid down, boating it upon this exhausting service, day and night, till it was effected. When this was done, he thanked God for having enabled him to get through this difficult part of his duty. ‘It had worn him down,’ he said, ‘and was infinitely more grievous to him than any resistance which he could experience from the enemy.’

At the first council of war, opinions inclined to an attack from the eastward ; but the next day, the wind being southerly, after a second examination of the Danish position, it was determined to attack from the south, approaching in the manner which Nelson had suggested in his first thoughts. On the morning of the 1st of April, the whole fleet removed to an anchorage within two leagues of the town, and off the N.W. end of the Middle Ground ; a shoal lying exactly before the town, at about three-quarters of a mile’s distance, and extending along its whole sea-front. The King’s Channel, where there is deep water, is between this shoal and the town ; and here the Danes had arranged their line of defence, as near the shore as possible ; nineteen ships and floating batteries, flanked, at the end nearest the town, by the Crown Batteries, which were two artificial islands at the mouth of the harbour—most formidable works ; the larger one having, by the Danish account, sixty-six guns ; but, as Nelson believed, eighty-eight. The fleet having anchored, Nelson, with Riou, in the *Amazon*, made his last examination of the ground ; and, about one o’clock, returning to his own ship, threw out the signal to weigh. It was received

with a shout throughout the whole division ; they weighed with a light and favourable wind : the narrow channel between the island of Saltholm and the Middle Ground had been accurately buoyed ; the small craft pointed out the course distinctly ; Riou led the way : the whole division coasted along the outer edge of the shoal, doubled its further extremity, and anchored there off Draco Point, just as the darkness closed—the headmost of the enemy's line not being more than two miles distant. The signal to prepare for action had been made early in the evening ; and, as his own anchor dropped, Nelson called out, 'I will fight them the moment I have a fair wind.' It had been agreed that Sir Hyde, with the remaining ships, should weigh on the following morning, at the same time as Nelson, to menace the Crown Batteries on his side, and the four ships of the line which lay at the entrance of the arsenal ; and to cover our own disabled ships as they came out of action.

The Danes, meantime, had not been idle : no sooner did the guns of Cronenberg make it known to the whole city that all negotiation was at an end, that the British fleet was passing the Sound, and that the dispute between the two crowns must now be decided by arms, than a spirit displayed itself most honourable to the Danish character. All ranks offered themselves to the service of their country ; the university furnished a corps of twelve hundred youths, the flower of Denmark—it was one of those emergencies in which little drilling or discipline is necessary to render courage available : they had nothing to learn but how to manage the guns, and were employed day and night in practising them. When the movements of Nelson's squadron were perceived, it was known when and where the attack was to be expected, and the line of defence was manned indiscriminately by soldiers, sailors, and citizens. Had not the whole attention of the Danes been directed to strengthen their own means of defence, they might most materially have annoyed the invading squadron, and, perhaps, frustrated the impending attack ; for the British ships were crowded in an anchoring ground of little extent :—it was calm, so that mortar-boats might have acted against them to the utmost advantage ; and they were within range of shells from Amak Island. A few fell among them, but the enemy

soon ceased to fire. It was learnt afterwards, that, fortunately for the fleet, the bed of the mortar had given way ; and the Danes either could not get it replaced, or, in the darkness, lost the direction.

Between eight and nine next morning the pilots were ordered on board the admiral's ship. They were mostly men who had been mates in Baltic traders ; and their hesitation about the bearing of the east end of the shoal, and the exact line of deep water, gave ominous warning of how little their knowledge was to be trusted. The signal for action had been made, the wind was fair—not a moment to be lost. Nelson urged them to be steady,—to be resolute, and to decide : but they wanted the only ground for steadiness and decision in such cases ; and Nelson had reason to regret that he had not trusted to Hardy's single report. This was one of the most painful moments of his life, and he always spoke of it with bitterness. 'I experienced in the Sound,' said he, 'the misery of having the honour of our country entrusted to a set of pilots, who have no other thought than to keep the ships clear of danger, and their own silly heads clear of shot. Everybody knows what I must have suffered : and if any merit attaches itself to me, it was for combating the dangers of the shallows in defiance of them.' At length Mr Bryerly, the master of the *Bellona*, declared that he was prepared to lead the fleet ; his judgment was acceded to by the rest : they returned to their ships ; and, at half-past nine, the signal was made to weigh in succession.

At five minutes after ten the action began. The first half of our fleet was engaged in about half an hour ; and, by half-past eleven, the battle became general. The plan of the attack had been complete : but seldom has any plan been more disconcerted by untoward accidents. Of twelve ships of the line, one was entirely useless, and two others in a situation where they could not render half the service which was required of them. Of the squadron of gun-brigs only one could get into action ; the rest were prevented, by baffling currents, from weathering the eastern end of the shoal ; and only two of the bomb-vessels could reach their station on the Middle Ground, and open their mortars on the arsenal, firing over both fleets.

Nelson's agitation had been extreme when he saw himself, before the action began, deprived of a fourth part of his ships of the line; but no sooner was he in battle, where his squadron was received with the fire of more than a thousand guns, than, as if that artillery, like music, had driven away all care and painful thoughts, his countenance brightened; and as a bystander describes him, his conversation became joyous, animated, elevated, and delightful. The commander-in-chief, meantime, near enough to the scene of action to know the unfavourable accidents which had so materially weakened Nelson, and yet too distant to know the real state of the contending parties, suffered the most dreadful anxiety. To get to his assistance was impossible; both wind and current were against him. Fear for the event, in such circumstances, would naturally preponderate in the bravest mind; and, at one o'clock, perceiving that, after three hours' endurance, the enemy's fire was unslackened, he began to despair of success. 'I will make the signal of recall,' said he to his captain, 'for Nelson's sake. If he is in a condition to continue the action successfully, he will disregard it; if he is not, it will be an excuse for his retreat, and no blame can be imputed to him.' Captain Domett urged him at least to delay the signal, till he could communicate with Nelson; but, in Sir Hyde's opinion, the danger was too pressing for delay:—'The fire,' he said, 'was too hot for Nelson to oppose; a retreat he thought must be made,—he was aware of the consequences to his own personal reputation, but it would be cowardly in him to leave Nelson to bear the whole shame of the failure, if shame it should be deemed.' Under a mistaken judgment, therefore, but with this disinterested and generous feeling, he made the signal for retreat.

Nelson was at this time, in all the excitement of action, pacing the quarter-deck. A shot through the mainmast knocked the splinters about; and he observed to one of his officers with a smile, 'It is warm work; and this day may be the last to any of us at a moment:—and then stopping short at the gangway, added with emotion—'But, mark you! I would not be elsewhere for thousands.' About this time the signal-lieutenant called out that No. 39 (the signal for discontinuing the action) was thrown out by the commander-in-chief.

He continued to walk the deck, and appeared to take no notice of it. The signal-officer met him at the next turn, and asked him if he should repeat it. 'No,' he replied, 'acknowledge it.' Presently he called after him to know if the signal for close action was still hoisted; and being answered in the affirmative, said, 'Mind you keep it so.' He now paced the deck, moving the stump of his lost arm in a manner which always indicated great emotion. 'Do you know,' said he to Mr Ferguson, 'what is shown on board the commander-in-chief? No. 39!' Mr Ferguson asked what that meant. 'Why, to leave off action!' Then, shrugging up his shoulders, he repeated the words—'Leave off action! You know, Foley,' turning to the captain, 'I have only one eye,—I have a right to be blind sometimes:' and then, putting the glass to his blind eye, in that mood of mind which sports with bitterness, he exclaimed, 'I really do not see the signal!' Presently he exclaimed, 'Keep mine for closer battle flying! That's the way I answer such signals! Nail mine to the mast!' Admiral Graves, who was so situated that he could not discern what was done on board the *Elephant*, disobeyed Sir Hyde's signal in like manner: whether by a fortunate mistake, or by a like brave intention, has not been made known.

The action continued along the line with unabated vigour on our side, and with the most determined resolution on the part of the Danes. They fought to great advantage, because most of the vessels in their line of defence were without masts: the few which had any standing had their topmasts struck, and the hulls could only be seen at intervals.

The prince-royal had taken his station upon one of the batteries, from whence he beheld the action, and issued his orders. Denmark had never been engaged in so arduous a contest, and never did the Danes more nobly display their national courage:—a courage not more unhappily, than impolitely, exerted in subserviency to the interests of France. A youth of seventeen, by name Villemoes, particularly distinguished himself on this memorable day. He had volunteered to take the command of a floating battery; which was a raft, consisting merely of a number of beams nailed together, with a flooring to support the guns: it was square, with a breastwork full of port-holes, and

without masts - carrying twenty-four guns, and one hundred and twenty men. With this he got under the stern of the *Elephant*, below the reach of the stern-chasers ; and under a heavy fire of small arms from the marines, fought his raft, till the truce was announced, with such skill, as well as courage, as to excite Nelson's warmest admiration.

Between one and two the fire of the Danes slackened ; about two it ceased from the greater part of their line, and some of their lighter ships were adrift. It was, however, difficult to take possession of those which struck, because the batteries on Amak Island protected them ; and because an irregular fire was kept up from the ships themselves as the boats approached. This arose from the nature of the action ; the crews were continually reinforced from the shore ; and fresh men coming on board, did not inquire whether the flag had been struck, or, perhaps, did not heed it ;—many, or most of them, never having been engaged in war before—knowing nothing, therefore, of its laws, and thinking only of defending their country to the last extremity. The *Dannebrog* fired upon the *Elephant's* boats in this manner, though her commodore had removed her pendant and deserted her, though she had struck, and though she was in flames. After she had been abandoned by the commodore, Braun fought her till he lost his right hand, and then Captain Lemining took the command. This unexpected renewal of her fire made the *Elephant* and *Glatton* renew theirs, till she was not only silenced, but nearly every man in the prams ahead and astern of her was killed. When the smoke of their guns died away, she was seen drifting in flames before the wind, those of her crew who remained alive, and able to exert themselves, throwing themselves out at her port-holes.

By half-past two the action had ceased along that part of the line which was astern of the *Elephant*, but not with the ships ahead and the Crown Batteries. Nelson, seeing the manner in which his boats were fired upon, when they went to take possession of the prizes, became angry, and said he must either send on shore to have this irregular proceeding stopped, or send a fire-ship and burn them. Half the shot from the *Trekroner* and from the batteries at Amak at this time struck the surrendered ships, four of which had got close together ; and the

fire of the English, in return, was equally, or even more, destructive to these poor devoted Danes. Nelson, who was as humane as he was brave, was shocked at this massacre—for such he called it—and, with a presence of mind peculiar to himself, and never more signally displayed than now, he retired into the stern gallery, and wrote thus to the crown-prince : ‘ Vice-Admiral Lord Nelson has been commanded to spare Denmark, when she no longer resists. The line of defence which covered her shores has struck to the British flag ; but if the firing is continued on the part of Denmark, he must set on fire all the prizes that he has taken, without having the power of saving the men who have so nobly defended them. The brave Danes are the brothers, and should never be the enemies, of the English.’ A wafer was given him, but he ordered a candle to be brought from the cockpit, and sealed the letter with wax, affixing a larger seal than he ordinarily used. ‘ This,’ said he, ‘ is no time to appear hurried and informal.’ Captain Sir Frederick Thesiger, who acted as his aid-de-camp, carried this letter with a flag of truce. Meantime the fire of the ships ahead, and the approach of the *Ramillies* and *Defence*, from Sir Hyde’s division, which had now worked near enough to alarm the enemy, though not to injure them, silenced the remainder of the Danish line to the eastward of the *Trekroner*. That battery, however, continued its fire. This formidable work, owing to the want of the ships which had been destined to attack it, was comparatively uninjured ; towards the close of the action it had been manned with nearly fifteen hundred men, and the intention of storming it, for which every preparation had been made, was abandoned as impracticable.

During Thesiger’s absence, Nelson sent for Freemantle from the *Ganges*, and consulted with him and Foley, whether it was advisable to advance, with those ships which had sustained least damage, against the yet uninjured part of the Danish line. They were decidedly of opinion, that the best thing which could be done was, while the wind continued fair, to remove the fleet out of the intricate channel from which it had to retreat. In somewhat more than half-an-hour after Thesiger had been despatched, the Danish adjutant-general Lindholm came bearing a flag of truce : upon which the *Trekroner* ceased

to fire, and the action closed after four hours' continuance. He brought an inquiry from the prince, What was the object of Nelson's note? The British admiral wrote in reply: 'Lord Nelson's object in sending a flag of truce was humanity; he therefore consents that hostilities shall cease, and that the wounded Danes may be taken on shore. And Lord Nelson will take his prisoners out of the vessels, and burn or carry off his prizes as he shall think fit. Lord Nelson, with humble duty to his royal highness the prince, will consider this the greatest victory he has ever gained, if it may be the cause of a happy reconciliation and union between his own most gracious sovereign and his majesty the King of Denmark.' Sir Frederick Thesiger was despatched a second time with the reply; and the Danish adjutant-general was referred to the commander-in-chief for a conference upon this overture. Lindholm assenting to this, proceeded to the *London*, which was riding at anchor full four miles off; and Nelson, losing not one of the critical moments which he had thus gained, made signal for his leading ships to weigh in succession:—they had the shoal to clear, they were much crippled, and their course was immediately under the guns of the *Trekroner*.

The *Monarch* led the way. This ship had received six-and-twenty shot between wind and water. She had not a shroud standing; there was a double-headed shot in the heart of her foremast, and the slightest wind would have sent every mast over her side. The imminent danger from which Nelson had extricated himself soon became apparent; the *Monarch* touched immediately upon a shoal, over which she was pushed by the *Ganges* taking her amid-ships; the *Glatton* went clear; but the other two, the *Defiance* and the *Elephant*, grounded about a mile from the *Trekroner*, and there remained fixed, for many hours, in spite of all the exertions of their wearied crews. The *Desirée* frigate also, at the other end of the line, having gone toward the close of the action to assist the *Bellona*, became fast on the same shoal. Nelson left the *Elephant*, soon after she took the ground, to follow Lindholm. 'Well,' said he, as he left the *Elephant*, 'I have fought contrary to orders, and I shall perhaps be hanged! Never mind, let them!'

His services had been too eminent on that day, his judgment

too conspicuous, his success too signal, for any commander, however jealous of his own authority, or envious of another's merits, to express anything but satisfaction and gratitude, which Sir Hyde heartily felt and sincerely expressed. It was speedily agreed that there should be a suspension of hostilities for four-and-twenty hours; that all the prizes should be surrendered, and the wounded Danes carried on shore. There was a pressing necessity for this; for the Danes, either from too much confidence in the strength of their positions, and the difficulty of the channel; or, supposing that the wounded might be carried on shore during the action, which was found totally impracticable; or, perhaps, from the confusion which the attack excited, had provided no surgeons; so that, when our men boarded the captured ships, they found many of the mangled and mutilated Danes bleeding to death for want of proper assistance; a scene, of all others, the most shocking to a brave man's feelings.

This was, indeed, a mournful day for Copenhagen! It was Good Friday; but the general agitation, and the mourning which was in every house, made all distinction of days be forgotten. There were, at that hour, thousands in that city who felt, and more, perhaps, who needed, the consolations of Christianity; but few or none who could be calm enough to think of its observances. The English were actively employed in refitting their own ships, securing the prizes, and distributing the prisoners; the Danes, in carrying on shore and disposing of the wounded and the dead. It had been a murderous action. Our loss, in killed and wounded, was nine hundred and fifty-three. The loss of the Danes, including prisoners, amounted to about six thousand. The negotiations, meantime, went on; and it was agreed that Nelson should have an interview with the prince the following day. Hardy and Freeman landed with him. This was a thing as unexampled as the other circumstances of the battle. A strong guard was appointed to escort him to the palace, as much for the purpose of security as of honour. The populace, according to the British account, showed a mixture of admiration, curiosity, and displeasure, at beholding that man in the midst of them who had inflicted such wounds upon Denmark. But there were neither acclama-

tions nor murmurs. 'The people,' says a Dane, 'did not degrade themselves with the former, nor disgrace themselves with the latter: the admiral was received as one brave enemy ever ought to receive another—he was received with respect.' The preliminaries of the negotiations were adjusted at this interview. During the repast which followed, Nelson, with all the sincerity of his character, bore willing testimony to the valour of his foes. He told the prince that he had been in a hundred and five engagements, but that this was the most tremendous of all. 'The French,' he said, 'fought bravely; but they could not have stood for one hour the fight which the Danes had supported for four.' He requested that Villemoes might be introduced to him; and, shaking hands with the youth, told the prince that he ought to be made an admiral. The prince replied: 'If, my lord, I am to make all my brave officers admirals, I should have no captains or lieutenants in my service.'

On the 9th, Nelson landed again, to conclude the terms of the armistice. A difficulty arose respecting the duration of it; and as the commissioners could not agree upon this head, they broke up, leaving Nelson to settle it with the prince. After dinner he was closeted with the prince; and they agreed that the armistice should continue fourteen weeks; and that, at its termination, fourteen days' notice should be given before the recommencement of hostilities.

For the battle of Copenhagen, Nelson was raised to the rank of viscount; an inadequate mark of reward for services so splendid, and of such paramount importance to the dearest interests of England. There was, however, some prudence in dealing out honours to him step by step; had he lived long enough, he would have fought his way up to a dukedom.

## CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN Nelson informed Earl St Vincent that the armistice had been concluded, he told him also, without reserve, his own discontent at the dilatoriness and indecision which he witnessed, and could not remedy. 'No man,' said he, 'but those who are on the spot, can tell what I have gone through, and do suffer. I make no scruple in saying, that I would have been at Revel fourteen days ago ! that, without this armistice, the fleet would never have gone, but by order of the Admiralty ; and with it, I dare say, we shall not go this week. I wanted Sir Hyde to let me, at least, go and cruise off Carlsberga, to prevent the Revel ships from getting in. I said I would not go to Revel to take any of those laurels which I was sure he would reap there. Think for me, my dear lord ; and if I have deserved well, let me return : if ill, for Heaven's sake supersede me,—for I cannot exist in this state.'

Fatigue, incessant anxiety, and a climate little suited to one of a tender constitution, which had now for many years been accustomed to more genial latitudes, made him, at this time, seriously determine upon returning home. 'If the northern business were not settled,' he said, 'they must send more admirals ; for the keen air of the north had cut him to the heart.' He felt the want of activity and decision in the commander-in-chief more keenly ; and this affected his spirits, and consequently his health, more than the inclemency of the Baltic. Soon after the armistice was signed, Sir Hyde proceeded to the eastward, with such ships as were fit for service, leaving Nelson to follow with the rest, as soon as those which had received slight damages should be repaired, and the rest sent to England. In passing between the isles of Amak and Saltholm, most of the ships touched the ground, and some of

them stuck fast for a while; no serious injury, however, was sustained. It was intended to act against the Russians first, before the breaking up of the frost should enable them to leave Revel; but, learning on the way that the Swedes had put to sea to effect a junction with them, Sir Hyde altered his course, in hopes of intercepting this part of the enemy's force. Nelson had, at this time, provided for the more pressing emergencies of the service, and prepared, on the 18th, to follow the fleet. The *St George* drew too much water to pass the channel between the isles without being lightened: the guns were therefore taken out, and put on board an American vessel: a contrary wind, however, prevented Nelson from moving; and on that same evening, while he was thus delayed, information reached him of the relative situation of the Swedish and British fleets, and the probability of an action. The fleet was nearly ten leagues distant; and both wind and current contrary; but it was not possible that Nelson could wait for a favourable season under such an expectation. He ordered his boat immediately and stepped into it. Night was setting in,—one of the cold spring nights of the north,—and it was discovered, soon after they had left the ship, that in their haste they had forgotten to provide him with a boat-cloak. He, however, forbade them to return for one: and when one of his companions offered his own great-coat, and urged him to make use of it, he replied, 'I thank you very much,—but, to tell you the truth, my anxiety keeps me sufficiently warm at present.'

'Do you think,' said he, presently, 'that our fleet has quitted Bornholm? If it has, we must follow it to Carls-crona.' About midnight he reached it, and once more got on board the *Elephant*. On the following morning the Swedes were discovered; as soon, however, as they perceived the English approaching, they retired, and took shelter in Carls-crona, behind the batteries on the island, at the entrance of that port. Sir Hyde sent in a flag of truce, stating that Denmark had concluded an armistice, and requiring an explicit declaration from the court of Sweden, whether it would adhere to, or abandon, the hostile measures which it had

taken against the rights and interests of Great Britain? The commander, Vice-Admiral Cronstadt, replied, 'That he could not answer a question which did not come within the particular circle of his duty; but that the king was then at Maloc, and would soon be at Carlscrona.' Gustavus shortly afterwards arrived, and an answer was then returned to this effect: 'That his Swedish majesty would not, for a moment, fail to fulfil, with fidelity and sincerity, the engagements he had entered into with his allies; but he would not refuse to listen to equitable proposals made by deputies furnished with proper authority by the King of Great Britain to the united northern powers.' Satisfied with this answer, and with the known disposition of the Swedish court, Sir Hyde sailed for the Gulf of Finland; but he had not proceeded far before a despatch-boat, from the Russian ambassador at Copenhagen, arrived, bringing intelligence of the death of the Emperor Paul; and that his successor, Alexander, had accepted the offer made by England to his father, of terminating the dispute by a convention.

Sir Hyde believed that the death of Paul had effected all that was necessary; but Nelson never trusted anything to the uncertain events of time which could possibly be secured by promptitude or resolution. It was not, therefore, without severe mortification that he saw the commander-in-chief return to the coast of Zealand, and anchor in Kioge Bay, there to wait patiently for what might happen.

There the fleet remained, till despatches arrived from home, on the 5th of May, recalling Sir Hyde, and appointing Nelson commander-in-chief.

Not a moment was now lost. His first signal, as commander-in-chief, was to hoist in all launches, and prepare to weigh: and on the 7th he sailed from Kioge. Part of his fleet was left at Bornholm to watch the Swedes: from whom he required, and obtained an assurance, that the British trade in the Cattegat, and in the Baltic, should not be molested; and saying how unpleasant it would be to him if anything should happen which might, for a moment, disturb the returning harmony between Sweden and Great Britain; he apprised them that he was not directed to abstain from hos-

tilities should he meet with the Swedish fleet at sea. Meantime he himself, with ten sail of the line, two frigates, a brig, and a schooner, made for the Gulf of Finland. Paul, in one of the freaks of his tyranny, had seized upon all the British effects in Russia, and even considered British subjects as his prisoners. 'I will have all the English shipping and property restored,' said Nelson, 'but I will do nothing violently,—neither commit the affairs of my country, nor suffer Russia to mix the affairs of Denmark or Sweden with the detention of our ships.' The wind was fair, and carried him in four days to Revel Roads. But the bay had been clear of firm ice on the 29th of April, while the English were lying idly at Kioge. The Russians had cut through the ice in the mole six feet thick, and their whole squadron had sailed for Cronstadt on the 3rd. Before that time it had lain at the mercy of the English. 'Nothing,' Nelson said, 'if it had been right to make the attack, could have saved one ship of them in two hours after our entering the bay.'

It so happened that there was no cause to regret the opportunity which had been lost, and Nelson immediately put the intentions of Russia to the proof. He sent on shore to say that he came with friendly views, and was ready to return a salute. On their part the salute was delayed, till a message was sent to them to inquire for what reason: and the officer, whose neglect had occasioned the delay, was put under arrest. Nelson wrote to the emperor, proposing to wait on him personally, and congratulate him on his accession, and urged the immediate release of British subjects, and restoration of British property.

The answer arrived on the 16th: Nelson, meantime, had exchanged visits with the governor, and the most friendly intercourse had subsisted between the ships and the shore. Alexander's ministers, in their reply, expressed their surprise at the arrival of a British fleet in a Russian port, and their wish that it should return: they professed, on the part of Russia, the most friendly disposition towards Great Britain, but declined the personal visit of Lord Nelson, unless he came in a single ship. There was a suspicion implied in this which stung Nelson: and he said the Russian ministers

would never have written thus if their fleet had been at Revel. He wrote an immediate reply, expressing what he felt ; he told the court of Petersburg, 'That the word of a British admiral, when given in explanation of any part of his conduct, was as sacred as that of any sovereign in Europe.' And he repeated, 'that, under other circumstances, it would have been his anxious wish to have paid his personal respects to the emperor, and signed with his own hand the act of amity between the two countries.' Having despatched this, he stood out to sea immediately, leaving a brig to bring off the provisions which had been contracted for, and to settle the accounts. 'I hope all is right,' said he, writing to our ambassador at Berlin ; 'but seamen are but bad negotiators ; for we put to issue in five minutes what diplomatic forms would be five months doing.'

On his way down the Baltic, however, he met the Russian Admiral Tchitchagof, whom the emperor, in reply to Sir Hyde's overtures, had sent to communicate personally with the British commander-in-chief. The reply was such as had been wished and expected : and these negotiators going, seaman-like, straight to their object, satisfied each other of the friendly intentions of their respective governments. Nelson then anchored off Rostock ; and there he received an answer to his last despatch from Revel, in which the Russian court expressed their regret that there should have been any misconception between them, informed him that the British vessels which Paul had detained were ordered to be liberated, and invited him to Petersburg in whatever mode might be most agreeable to himself. Other honours awaited him : the Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, the queen's brother, came to visit him on board his ship ; and towns of the inland parts of Mecklenburg sent deputations, with their public books of record, that they might have the name of Nelson in them written by his own hand.

From Rostock, the fleet returned to Kioge Bay. Nelson saw that the temper of the Danes towards England was such as naturally arose from the chastisement which they had so recently received. 'In this nation,' said he, 'we shall not be forgiven for having the upper hand of them : I only thank

God we have, or they would try to humble us to the dust.'

Nelson was not deceived in his judgment of the Danish cabinet, but the battle of Copenhagen had crippled its power. The death of the Czar Paul had broken the confederacy; and that cabinet, therefore, was compelled to defer, till a more convenient season, the indulgence of its enmity towards Great Britain. Soon afterwards, Admiral Sir Charles Maurice Pole arrived to take the command. The business, military and political, had by that time been so far completed, that the presence of the British fleet soon became no longer necessary. When Nelson left the fleet, this speedy termination of the expedition, though confidently expected, was not certain; and he, in his unwillingness to weaken the British force, thought at one time of traversing Jutland in his boat, by the canal, to Tonningen on the Eyder, and finding his way home from thence. This intention was not executed; but he returned in a brig, declining to accept a frigate: which few admirals would have done, especially if, like him, they suffered from sea-sickness in a small vessel. On his arrival at Yarmouth, he was presently surrounded by the populace, and the military were drawn up in the market-place ready to receive him, but making his way through the dust, and the crowd, and the clamour, he went straight to the hospital to see the men who had been wounded in the late battle,—that victory which had added new glory to the name of Nelson, and which was of more importance even than the battle of the Nile to the honour, the strength, and security of England. He stopped at every bed, and had something kind and cheering to say to every man. Coming to a bed on which a sailor was lying, whose right arm had been taken off, close to the shoulder-joint, he said to him, 'Well, Jack, what's the matter?' 'Lost my right arm, your honour,' was his reply. Nelson paused, looked down at his own empty sleeve, then at the sailor, and said playfully, 'Well, Jack, then you and I are spoilt for fishermen. Cheer up, my brave fellow!' and he passed briskly on to the next bed. But these few words, says Dr Good, then a youth, who was attending that hospital, and went round the wards with him—these few words had a magical effect upon the poor fellow: I saw his eyes sparkle

with delight as Nelson turned away and pursued his course.

He had not been many weeks on shore before he was called upon to undertake a service for which no Nelson was required. Bonaparte, who was now first consul, and in reality sole ruler of France, was making preparations, upon a great scale, for invading England: but his schemes in the Baltic had been baffled: fleets could not be created as they were wanted; and his armies, therefore, were to come over in gun-boats, and such small craft as could be rapidly built or collected for the occasion. A general alarm was excited: and, in condescension to this unworthy feeling, Nelson was appointed to a command extending from Orfordness to Beachy Head, on both shores:—a sort of service, he said, for which he felt no other ability than what might be found in his zeal.

To this service, however, such as it was, he applied with his wonted alacrity; and having hoisted his flag in the *Medusa* frigate, went to reconnoitre Boulogne, the point from which it was supposed the great attempt would be made, and which the French, in fear of an attack themselves, were fortifying with all care. He approached near enough to sink two of their floating batteries, and destroy a few gun-boats which were without the pier; what damage was done within could not be ascertained. ‘Boulogne,’ he said, ‘was certainly not a very pleasant place that morning: but,’ he added, ‘it is not my wish to injure the poor inhabitants; and the town is spared as much as the nature of the service will admit.’ Enough was done to show the enemy that they could not, with impunity, come outside their own ports. Nelson was satisfied, by what he saw, that they meant to make an attempt from this place, but that it was impracticable; for the least wind at W.N.W., and they were lost. The ports of Flushing and Flanders were better points: there we could not tell by our eyes what means of transport were provided. From thence, therefore, if it came forth at all, the expedition would come:—‘And what a forlorn undertaking!’ said he: ‘consider cross tides, &c. As for rowing, that is impossible. It is perfectly right to be prepared for a mad government: but with the active force which has been given me, I may pronounce it almost impracticable.’

That force had been got together with an alacrity which has seldom been equalled. On the 28th of July we were, in Nelson's own words, literally at the foundation of our fabric of defence: and twelve days afterwards we were so prepared on the enemy's coast, that he did not believe they could get three miles from their ports. The *Medusa*, returning to our own shores, anchored in the rolling ground off Harwich; and when Nelson wished to get to the Nore in her, the wind rendered it impossible to proceed there by the usual channel. In haste to be at the Nore, remembering that he had been a tolerable pilot for the mouth of the Thames in his younger days, and thinking it necessary that he should know all that could be known of the navigation, he requested the maritime surveyor of the coast, Mr Spence, to get him into the Swin by any channel: for neither the pilots whom he had on board, nor the Harwich ones, would take charge of the ship. No vessel drawing more than fourteen feet had ever before ventured over the Naze. Mr Spence, however, who had surveyed the channel, carried her safely through. The channel has since been called Nelson's, though he himself wished it to be named after the *Medusa*: his name needed no new memorial.

Nelson's eye was upon Flushing. 'To take possession of that place,' he said, 'would be a week's expedition for four or five thousand troops.' This, however, required a consultation with the Admiralty; and that something might be done meantime, he resolved upon attacking the flotilla in the mouth of Boulogne harbour. This resolution was made in deference to the opinion of others, and to the public feeling which was so preposterously excited. He himself scrupled not to assert that the French army would never embark at Boulogne for the invasion of England; and he owned that this boat-warfare was not congenial to his feelings. Into Helvoet or Flushing he should be happy to lead, if Government turned their thoughts that way. 'While I serve,' said he, 'I will do it actively, and to the very best of my abilities. I require nursing like a child,' he added; 'my mind carries me beyond my strength, and will do me up: but such is my nature.'

The attack was made by the boats of the squadron in five

divisions, under Captains Somerville, Parker, Cotgrave, Jones, and Conn. The previous essay had taught the French the weak parts of their position ; and they omitted no means of strengthening it, and of guarding against the expected attempt. The boats put off about half-an-hour before midnight ; but, owing to the darkness, and tide and half-tide, which must always make night attacks so uncertain on the coasts of the channel, the divisions separated. One could not arrive at all ; another not till near daybreak. The others made their attack gallantly ; but the enemy were fully prepared : every vessel was defended by long poles, headed with iron spikes, projecting from their sides : strong nettings were braced up to their lower yards ; they were moored by the bottom to the shore, and chained one to another ; they were strongly manned with soldiers, and protected by land-batteries, and the shore was lined with troops. Many were taken possession of ; and, though they could not have been brought out, would have been burned, had not the French resorted to a mode of offence which they have often used, but which no other people have ever been wicked enough to employ. The moment the firing ceased on board one of their own vessels, they fired upon it from the shore, perfectly regardless of their own men.

In his private letters to the Admiralty, Nelson affirmed that had our force arrived as he intended, it was not all the chains in France which could have prevented our men from bringing off the whole of the vessels. There had been no error committed, and never did Englishmen display more courage. Upon this point Nelson was fully satisfied ; but he said he should never bring himself again to allow any attack wherein he was not personally concerned ; and that his mind suffered more than if he had had a leg shot off in the affair. He grieved particularly for Captain Parker, an excellent officer, to whom he was greatly attached, and who had an aged father looking to him for assistance. His thigh was shattered in the action, and the wound proved mortal, after some weeks of suffering and manly resignation. During this interval, Nelson's anxiety was very great. 'Dear Parker is my child,' said he, 'for I found him in distress.' And when

he received the tidings of his death, he replied :—‘ You will judge of my feelings : God’s will be done. I beg that his hair may be cut off, and given me ; it shall be buried in my grave. Poor Mr Parker ! what a son has he lost ! If I were to say I was content, I should lie ; but I shall endeavour to submit with all the fortitude in my power. His loss has made a wound in my heart which time will hardly heal.’

He now wished to be relieved from this service. The country, he said, had attached a confidence to his name which he had submitted to, and therefore had cheerfully repaired to the station ; but this boat business, though it might be part of a great plan of invasion, could never be the only one, and he did not think it was a command for a vice-admiral. Just at this time the peace of Amiens was signed. Nelson rejoiced that the experiment was made, but was well aware that it was an experiment : he saw what he called the misery of peace, unless the utmost vigilance and prudence were exerted ; and he expressed, in bitter terms, his proper indignation at the manner in which the mob of London welcomed the French general who brought the ratification ; saying, ‘ that they made him ashamed of his country.’

He had purchased a house and estate at Merton, in Surrey, meaning to pass his days there, in the society of Sir William and Lady Hamilton. This place he had never seen, till he was now welcomed there by the friends to whom he had so passionately devoted himself, and who were not less sincerely attached to him.

Soon after the conclusion of peace, tidings arrived of our final and decisive successes in Egypt : in consequence of which the common council voted their thanks to the army and navy for bringing the campaign to so glorious a conclusion. When Nelson, after the action of Cape St Vincent, had been entertained at a city feast, he had observed to the lord mayor, ‘ That, if the city continued its generosity, the navy would ruin them in gifts.’ To which the lord mayor replied, putting his hand upon the admiral’s shoulder, ‘ Do you find victories, and we will find rewards.’

The happiness which Nelson enjoyed in the society of his chosen friends was of no long continuance. Sir William

Hamilton, who was far advanced in years, died early in 1803. He expired in his wife's arms, holding Nelson by the hand; and almost in his last words left her to his protection. A few weeks after this event the war was renewed; and, the day after his majesty's message to parliament, Nelson departed to take the command of the Mediterranean fleet.

He took his station immediately off Toulon, and there, with incessant vigilance, waited for the coming out of the enemy. When he had been fourteen months thus employed, he received a vote of thanks from the city of London, for his skill and perseverance in blockading that port, so as to prevent the French from putting to sea. Nelson, in his answer to the lord mayor, said: 'I beg to inform your lordship that the port of Toulon has never been blockaded by me: quite the reverse. Every opportunity has been offered the enemy to put to sea; for it is there that we hope to realize the hopes and expectations of our country.' Nelson then remarked, that the junior flag-officers of his fleet had been omitted in this vote of thanks; and his surprise at the omission was expressed with more asperity, perhaps, than an offence. so entirely and manifestly unintentional deserved; but it arose from that generous regard for the feelings as well as interests of all who were under his command, which made him as much beloved in the fleets of Britain as he was dreaded in those of the enemy.

Never was any commander more beloved. He governed men by their reason and their affections: they knew that he was incapable of caprice or tyranny; and they obeyed him with alacrity and joy, because he possessed their confidence as well as their love. 'Our Nel,' they used to say, 'is as brave as a lion, and as gentle as a lamb.'

When Nelson took the command, it was expected that the Mediterranean would be an active scene. Nelson well understood the character of the perfidious Corsican, who was now sole tyrant of France; and knowing that he was as ready to attack his friends as his enemies, knew, therefore, that nothing could be more uncertain than the direction of the fleet from Toulon, whenever it should put to sea. 'It had as many destinations,' he said, 'as there were countries.' The

momentous revolutions of the last ten years had given him ample matter for reflection, as well as opportunities for observation: the film was cleared from his eyes; and now, when the French no longer went abroad with the cry of liberty and equality, he saw that the oppression and misrule of the powers which had been opposed to them had been the main causes of their success, and that those causes would still prepare the way before them. Even in Sicily, where, if it had been possible longer to blind himself, Nelson would willingly have seen no evil, he perceived that the people wished for a change, and acknowledged that they had reason to wish for it. In Sardinia, the same burden of misgovernment was felt; and the people, like the Sicilians, were impoverished by a government so utterly incompetent to perform its first and most essential duties, that it did not protect its own coasts from the Barbary pirates. He would fain have had us purchase this island (the finest in the Mediterranean) from its sovereign, who did not receive £5000 a-year from it, after its wretched establishment was paid. There was reason to think that France was preparing to possess herself of this important point, which afforded our fleet facilities for watching Toulon not to be obtained elsewhere. An expedition was preparing at Corsica for the purpose; and all the Sardes, who had taken part with revolutionary France, were ordered to assemble there. It was certain that if the attack were made, it would succeed. Nelson thought that the only means to prevent Sardinia from becoming French was to make it English, and that half-a-million would give the king a rich price, and England a cheap purchase.

The proposed attack was postponed. Views of wider ambition were opening upon Bonaparte, who now almost undisguisedly aspired to make himself master of the continent of Europe; and Austria was preparing for another struggle, to be conducted as weakly, and terminated as miserably, as the former. Spain, too, was once more to be involved in war by the policy of France; that perfidious government having in view the double object of employing the Spanish resources against England, and exhausting them, in order to render Spain herself finally its prey. Nelson, who knew that

England and the Peninsula ought to be in alliance, for the common interest of both, frequently expressed his hopes that Spain might resume her natural rank among the nations. 'We ought,' he said, 'by mutual consent, to be the very best friends, and both to be ever hostile to France.' But he saw that Bonaparte was meditating the destruction of Spain; and that, while the wretched court of Madrid professed to remain neutral, the appearances of neutrality were scarcely preserved. An order of the year 1771, excluding British ships of war from the Spanish ports, was revived, and put in force; while French privateers, from these very ports, annoyed the British trade, carried their prizes in, and sold them even at Barcelona. Nelson complained of this to the captain-general of Catalonia, informing him that he claimed, for every British ship or squadron, the right of lying, as long as it pleased, in the ports of Spain, while that right was allowed to other powers. To the British ambassador he said: 'I am ready to make large allowances for the miserable situation Spain has placed herself in; but there is a certain line beyond which I cannot submit to be treated with disrespect. We have given up French vessels taken within gun-shot of the Spanish shore, and yet French vessels are permitted to attack our ships from the Spanish shore. Your excellency may assure the Spanish government, that in whatever place the Spaniards allow the French to attack us, in that place I shall order the French to be attacked.'

During this state of things, to which the weakness of Spain, and not her will, consented, the enemy's fleet did not venture to put to sea. Nelson watched it with unremitting and almost unexampled perseverance. The station off Toulon he called his home. 'We are in the right fighting trim,' said he; 'let them come as soon as they please. I never saw a fleet altogether so well officered and manned: would to God the ships were half so good! The finest ones in the service would soon be destroyed by such terrible weather. I know well enough, that if I were to go into Malta I should save the ships during this bad season; but if I am to watch the French, I must be at sea; and if at sea, must have bad weather: and if the ships are not fit to stand bad weather,

they are useless.' Then only he was satisfied, and at ease, when he had the enemy in view. Mr Elliot, our minister at Naples, seems, at this time, to have proposed to send a confidential Frenchman to him with information. 'I should be very happy,' he replied, 'to receive authentic intelligence of the destination of the French squadron, their route, and time of sailing. Anything short of this is useless; and I assure your excellency, that I would not, upon any consideration, have a Frenchman in the fleet, except as a prisoner. I put no confidence in them. You think yours good; the queen thinks the same: I believe they are all alike. Whatever information you can get me, I shall be very thankful for; but not a Frenchman comes here. Forgive me, but my mother hated the French!'

M. Latouche Treville, who had commanded at Boulogne, commanded now at Toulon. 'He was sent for on purpose,' said Nelson, 'as he beat me at Boulogne, to beat me again; but he seems very loth to try.' One day, while the main body of our fleet was out of sight of land, Rear-Admiral Campbell, reconnoitring with the *Canopus*, *Donegul*, and *Amazone*, stood in close to the port, and M. Latouche, taking advantage of a breeze which sprung up, pushed out, with four ships of the line, and three heavy frigates, and chased him about four leagues. The Frenchman, delighted at having found himself in so novel a situation, published a boastful account; affirming that he had given chase to the whole British fleet, and that Nelson had fled before him. Nelson thought it due to the Admiralty to send home a copy of the *Victory's* log upon this occasion. 'As for himself,' he said, 'if his character was not established by that time for not being apt to run away, it was not worth his while to put the world right.' 'If this fleet gets fairly up with M. Latouche,' said he to one of his correspondents, 'his letter, with all his ingenuity, must be different to his last. We had fancied that we chased him into Toulon; for, blind as I am, I could see his water-line, when he clued his topsails up, shutting in Sepet. But, from the time of his meeting Captain Hawker in the *Iris*, I never heard anything of his acting otherwise than as a poltroon and a liar. Contempt is the best mode of

treating such a miscreant.' In spite, however, of contempt, the impudence of this Frenchman half-angered him. He said to his brother : ' You will have seen Latouche's letter ; how he chased me, and how I ran. I keep it ; and if I take him he shall eat it.'

Nelson, who used to say that in sea affairs nothing is impossible, and nothing improbable, feared the more that this Frenchman might get out and elude his vigilance ; because he was so especially desirous of catching him, and administering to him his own lying letter in a sandwich. M. Latouche, however, escaped him in another way. He died, according to the French papers, in consequence of walking so often up to the signal post upon Sepet, to watch the British fleet. ' I always pronounced that would be his death,' said Nelson. ' If he had come out and fought me, it would, at least, have added ten years to my life.' The patience with which he had watched Toulon he spoke of, truly, as a perseverance at sea which had never been surpassed. From May, 1803, to August, 1805, he himself went out of his ship but three times ; each of those times was upon the king's service, and neither time of absence exceeded an hour. The weather had been so unusually severe, that he said the Mediterranean seemed altered. It was his rule never to contend with the gales ; but either run to the southward, to escape their violence, or furl all the sails, and make the ships as easy as possible. The men, though he said flesh and blood could hardly stand it, continued in excellent health, which he ascribed, in great measure, to a plentiful supply of lemons and onions. For himself, he thought he could only last till the battle was over. One battle more it was his hope that he might fight. ' However,' said he, ' whatever happens I have run a glorious race.' He was afraid of blindness : and this was the only evil which he could not contemplate without unhappiness. More alarming symptoms he regarded with less apprehension ; describing his own ' shattered carcass ' as in the worst plight of any in the fleet ; and he says : ' I have felt the blood gushing up the left side of my head : and the moment it covers the brain, I am fast asleep.' The fleet was in worse trim than the men : but when he compared it with the

enemy's, it was with a right English feeling. 'The French fleet, yesterday,' said he, in one of his letters, 'was to appear in high feather, and as fine as paint could make them ; but when they may sail, or where they may go, I am very sorry to say is a secret I am not acquainted with. Our weather-beaten ships, I have no fear, will make their sides like a plum-pudding.'

Hostilities at length commenced between Great Britain and Spain. That country, whose miserable government made her subservient to France, was once more destined to lavish her resources and her blood in furtherance of the designs of a perfidious ally. The immediate occasion of the war was the seizure of four treasure-ships by the English. The act was perfectly justifiable ; for those treasures were intended to furnish means for France ; but the circumstances which attended it were as unhappy as they were unforeseen. Four frigates had been despatched to intercept them. They met with an equal force. Resistance, therefore, became a point of honour on the part of the Spaniards, and one of their ships soon blew up with all on board. Had a stronger squadron been sent, this deplorable catastrophe might have been spared —a catastrophe which excited not more indignation in Spain, than it did grief in those who were its unwilling instruments, in the English government and in the English people. On the 5th of October this unhappy affair occurred, and Nelson was not apprised of it till the 12th of the ensuing month. He had, indeed, sufficient mortification at the breaking out of this Spanish war ; an event which, it might reasonably have been supposed, would amply enrich the officers of the Mediterranean fleet, and repay them for the severe and unremitting duty on which they had been so long employed. But of this harvest they were deprived ; for Sir John Orde was sent with a small squadron, and a separate command, to Cadiz. Nelson's feelings were never wounded so deeply as now. 'I had thought,' said he, writing in the first flow and freshness of indignation : 'I fancied—but, nay ; it must have been a dream, an idle dream—yet, I confess it, I *did* fancy that I had done my country service ; and thus they use me ! And under what circumstances, and with what pointed aggravated

tion ! Yet, if I know my own thoughts, it is not for myself, or on my own account chiefly, that I feel the sting and the disappointment. No ! it is for my brave officers ; for my noble-minded friends and comrades. Such a gallant set of fellows ! Such a band of brothers ! My heart swells at the thought of them !'

War between Spain and England was now declared ; and, on the 18th of January, the Toulon fleet, having the Spaniards to co-operate with them, put to sea. Nelson was at anchor off the coast of Sardinia, where the Madelena islands form one of the finest harbours in the world, when, at three in the afternoon of the 19th, the *Active* and *Seahorse* frigates brought this long-hoped-for intelligence. They had been close to the enemy at ten on the preceding night, but lost sight of them in about four hours. The fleet immediately unmoored and weighed, and at six in the evening ran through the strait between Biche and Sardinia ; a passage so narrow, that the ships could only pass one at a time, each following the stern-lights of its leader. From the position of the enemy, when they were last seen, it was inferred that they must be bound round the southern end of Sardinia. Signal was made the next morning to prepare for battle. Bad weather came on, baffling the one fleet in its object, and the other in its pursuit. Nelson beat about the Sicilian seas for ten days, without obtaining any other information of the enemy than that one of their ships had put into Ajaccio dismasted ; and having seen that Sardinia, Naples, and Sicily, were safe, believing Egypt to be their destination, for Egypt he ran.

Baffled there, he bore up for Malta, and met intelligence from Naples that the French, having been dispersed in a gale, had put back to Toulon. From the same quarter he learned that a great number of saddles and muskets had been embarked : and this confirmed him in his opinion that Egypt was their destination. That they should have put back in consequence of storms which he had weathered, gave him a consoling sense of British superiority. 'These gentlemen,' said he, 'are not accustomed to a Gulf of Lyons' gale ; we have buffeted them for one-and-twenty months, and not carried away a spar.' He, however, who had so often braved

these gales, was now, though not mastered by them, vexatiously thwarted and impeded ; and, on February 27, he was compelled to anchor in Pulla Bay, in the Gulf of Cagliari. From the 21st of January, the fleet had remained ready for battle, without a bulkhead up, night or day. He anchored here that he might not be driven to leeward. As soon as the weather moderated he put to sea again ; and after again beating about against contrary winds, another gale drove him to anchor in the Gulf of Palma, on the 8th of March. This he made his rendezvous ; he knew that the French troops still remained embarked, and wishing to lead them into a belief that he was stationed upon the Spanish coast, he made his appearance off Barcelona with that intent. About the end of the month, he began to fear that the plan of the expedition was abandoned ; and sailing once more towards his old station off Toulon, on the 4th of April, he met the *Phœbe*, with news that Villeneuve had put to sea on the last of March with eleven ships of the line, seven frigates, and two brigs. When last seen, they were steering toward the coast of Africa. Nelson first covered the channel between Sardinia and Barbary, so as to satisfy himself that Villeneuve was not taking the same route for Egypt which Gantheaume had taken before him, when he attempted to carry reinforcements there. Certain of this, he bore up on the 7th for Palermo, lest the French should pass to the north of Corsica, and he despatched cruisers in all directions. On the 11th, he felt assured that they were not gone down the Mediterranean ; and sending off frigates to Gibraltar, to Lisbon, and to Admiral Cornwallis, who commanded the squadron off Brest, he endeavoured to get to the westward, beating against westerly winds. After five days, a neutral gave intelligence that the French had been seen off Cape de Gatte on the 7th. It was soon after ascertained that they had passed the Straits of Gibraltar on the day following ; and Nelson, knowing that they might already be half-way to Ireland, or to Jamaica, exclaimed, that he was miserable. One gleam of comfort only came across him in the reflection, that his vigilance had rendered it impossible for them to undertake any expedition in the Mediterranean.

Eight days after this certain intelligence had been obtained,

he described his state of mind thus forcibly, in writing to the governor of Malta: 'My good fortune, my dear Ball, seems flown away. I cannot get a fair wind, or even a side wind. Dead foul! Dead foul! But my mind is fully made up what to do when I leave the Straits, supposing there is no certain account of the enemy's destination. I believe this ill-luck will go near to kill me; but as these are times for exertion, I must not be cast down, whatever I may feel.' In spite of every exertion which could be made by all the zeal and all the skill of British seamen, he did not get in sight of Gibraltar till the 30th of April; and the wind was then so adverse, that it was impossible to pass the Gut. He anchored in Mazari Bay, on the Barbary shore; obtained supplies from Tetuan; and when, on the 5th, a breeze from the eastward sprang up at last, sailed once more, hoping to hear of the enemy from Sir John Orde, who commanded off Cadiz, or from Lisbon. 'If nothing is heard of them,' said he to the Admiralty, 'I shall probably think the rumours which have been spread are true, that their object is the West Indies; and, in that case, I think it my duty to follow them; or to the Antipodes, should I believe that to be their destination.' At the time when this resolution was taken, the physician of the fleet had ordered him to return to England before the hot months.

Nelson had formed his judgment of their destination, and made up his mind accordingly, when Donald Campbell, at that time an admiral in the Portuguese service, the same person who had given important tidings to Earl St Vincent of the movements of that fleet from which he won his title, a second time gave timely and momentous intelligence to the flag of his country. He went on board the *Victory*, and communicated to Nelson his certain knowledge that the combined Spanish and French fleets were bound for the West Indies. Hitherto all things had favoured the enemy. While the British commander was beating up against strong southerly and westerly gales, they had wind to their wish from the N.E., and had done in nine days what he was a whole month in accomplishing. Villeneuve, finding the Spaniards at Cartagena were not in a state of equipment to join him, dared not

wait, but hastened on to Cadiz. Sir John Orde necessarily retired at his approach. Admiral Gravina, with six Spanish ships of the line, and two French, came out to him, and they sailed without a moment's loss of time. They had about three thousand French troops on board, and fifteen hundred Spanish; six hundred were under orders, expecting them at Martinique, and one thousand at Guadaloupe. General Lauriston commanded the troops. The combined fleet now consisted of eighteen sail of the line, six forty-four gun frigates, one of twenty-six guns, three corvettes, and a brig. They were joined afterwards by two new French line-of-battle ships, and one forty-four. Nelson pursued them with ten sail of the line and three frigates. 'Take you a Frenchman a-piece,' said he to his captains, 'and leave me the Spaniards; when I haul down my colours I expect you to do the same; and not till then.'

The enemy had five-and-thirty days' start; but he calculated that he should gain eight or ten days upon them by his exertions. May 15th he made Madeira, and on June 4th reached Barbadoes, whither he had sent despatches before him; and where he found Admiral Cochrane, with two ships, part of our squadron in those seas being at Jamaica. He found here also accounts that the combined fleets had been seen from St Lucia on the 28th, standing to the southward, and that Tobago and Trinidad were their objects. This Nelson doubted; but he was alone in his opinion, and yielded it with these foreboding words—'If your intelligence proves false, you lose me the French fleet.' Sir William Myers offered to embark here with two thousand troops:—they were taken on board, and the next morning he sailed for Tobago. Here accident confirmed the false intelligence which had, whether from intention or error, misled him. A merchant of Tobago, in the general alarm, not knowing whether this fleet was friend or foe, sent out a schooner to reconnoitre, and acquaint him by signal. The signal which he had chosen happened to be the very one which had been appointed by Colonel Shipley of the engineers to signify that the enemy were at Trinidad; and as this was at the close of day, there was no opportunity of discovering the mistake. An American

brig was met with about the same time ; the master of which, with that propensity to deceive the English and assist the French in any manner, which has been but too common among his countrymen, affirmed, that he had been boarded off Granada a few days before by the French, who were standing towards the Bocas of Trinidad. This fresh intelligence removed all doubts. The ships were cleared for action before daylight, and Nelson entered the Bay of Paria on the 7th, hoping and expecting to make the mouths of the Orinoco as famous in the annals of the British navy as those of the Nile. Not an enemy was there ; and it was discovered that accident and artifice had combined to lead him so far to leeward, that there could have been little hope of fetching to windward of Granada for any other fleet. Nelson, however, with skill and exertions never exceeded, and almost unexampled, bore for that island.

Advices met him on the way, that the combined fleets, having captured the Diamond Rock, were then at Martinique on the 4th, and were expected to sail that night for the attack of Granada. On the 9th, Nelson arrived off that island, and there learned that they had passed to leeward of Antigua the preceding day, and taken a homeward-bound convoy. Had it not been for false information, upon which Nelson had acted reluctantly, and in opposition to his own judgment, he would have been off Port Royal just as they were leaving it, and the battle would have been fought on the spot where Rodney defeated De Grasse. This he remembered in his vexation ; but he had saved the colonies and above two hundred ships laden for Europe, which would else have fallen into the enemy's hands ; and he had the satisfaction of knowing that the mere terror of his name had effected this, and had put to flight the allied enemies, whose force nearly doubled that before which they fled. That they were flying back to Europe he believed, and for Europe he steered in pursuit on the 13th, having disembarked the troops at Antigua, and taking with him the *Spartiate*, seventy-four : the only addition to the squadron with which he was pursuing so superior a force. Five days afterwards the *Amazon* brought intelligence that she had spoke a schooner who had seen them, on the evening

of the 15th, steering to the north ; and, by computation, eighty-seven leagues off. Nelson's diary at this time denotes his great anxiety, and his perpetual and all-observing vigilance. 'June 21, Midnight.—Nearly calm ; saw three planks which I think came from the French fleet. Very miserable, which is very foolish.' On the 17th of July, he came in sight of Cape St Vincent, and steered for Gibraltar. 'July 18th,' his diary says, 'Cape Spartel in sight, but no French fleet, nor any information about them. How sorrowful this makes me ! but I cannot help myself.' The next day he anchored at Gibraltar, and on the 20th, says he, 'I went on shore for the first time since June 16th, 1803 ; and from having my foot out of the *Victory*, two years, wanting ten days.'

Here he communicated with his old friend Collingwood, who, having been detached with a squadron, when the disappearance of the combined fleets, and of Nelson in their pursuit, was known in England, had taken his station off Cadiz. He thought that Ireland was the enemy's ultimate object ; that they would now liberate the Ferrol squadron, which was blocked up by Sir Robert Calder, call for the Rochefort ships, and then appear off Ushant with three or four-and-thirty sail ; there to be joined by the Brest fleet. With this great force he supposed they would make for Ireland—the real mark and bent of all their operations ; and their flight to the West Indies, he thought, had been merely undertaken to take off Nelson's force, which was the great impediment to their undertaking.

Collingwood was gifted with great political penetration. As yet, however, all was conjecture concerning the enemy ; and Nelson, having victualled and watered at Tetuan, stood for Ceuta on the 24th, still without information of their course. Next day intelligence arrived that the *Curieux* brig had seen them on the 19th, standing to the northward. He proceeded off Cape St Vincent, rather cruising for intelligence than knowing whither to betake himself ; and here a case occurred that, more than any other event in real history, resembles those whimsical proofs of sagacity which Voltaire, in his '*Zadig*,' has borrowed from the Orientals. One of our frigates spoke an American who, a little to the westward of the Azores,

had fallen in with an armed vessel, appearing to be a dismasted privateer, deserted by her crew, which had been run on board by another ship, and had been set fire to ; but the fire had gone out. A log-book, and a few seaman's jackets, were found in the cabin ; and these were brought to Nelson. The log-book closed with these words : ' Two large vessels in the W.N.W. ; ' and this led him to conclude that the vessel had been an English privateer, cruising off the Western Islands. But there was in this book a scrap of dirty paper, filled with figures. Nelson, immediately upon seeing it, observed that the figures were written by a Frenchman : and, after studying this for awhile, said : ' I can explain the whole. The jackets are of French manufacture, and prove that the privateer was in possession of the enemy. She had been chased and taken by the two ships that were seen in the W.N.W. The prize-master, going on board in a hurry, forgot to take with him his reckoning ; there is none in the log-book ; and the dirty paper contains her work for the number of days since the privateer last left Corvo : with an unaccounted-for run, which I take to have been the chase, in his endeavour to find out her situation by back-reckonings. By some mismanagement, I conclude, she was run on board of by one of the enemy's ships, and dismasted. Not liking delay (for I am satisfied that those two ships were the advanced ones of the French squadron), and fancying we were close at their heels, they set fire to the vessel, and abandoned her in a hurry. If this explanation be correct, I infer from it that they are gone more to the northward, and more to the northward I will look for them.' This course accordingly he held, but still without success. Still persevering, and still disappointed, he returned near enough to Cadiz to ascertain that they were not there ; traversed the Bay of Biscay ; and then, as a last hope, stood over for the north-west coast of Ireland, against adverse winds ; till, on the evening of the 12th of August, he learned that they had not been heard of there. Frustrated thus in all his hopes, after a pursuit to which, for its extent, rapidity, and perseverance, no parallel can be produced, he judged it best to reinforce the channel fleet with his squadron, lest the enemy, as Collingwood apprehended, should bear down upon Brest with

their whole collected force. On the 15th, he joined Admiral Cornwallis off Ushant. No news had yet been obtained of the enemy; and, on the same evening, he received orders to proceed, with the *Victory* and *Superb*, to Portsmouth.

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## CHAPTER IX.

At Portsmouth, Nelson at length found news of the combined fleets. Sir Robert Calder, who had been sent out to intercept their return, had fallen in with them on the 22nd of July, sixty leagues west of Cape Finisterre. Their force consisted of twenty sail of the line, three fifty-gun ships, five frigates, and two brigs; his, of fifteen line-of-battle ships, two frigates, a cutter, and a lugger. After an action of four hours he had captured an eighty-four and a seventy-four, and then thought it necessary to bring-to the squadron, for the purpose of securing their prizes. The hostile fleets remained in sight of each other till the 26th, when the enemy bore away. The capture of two ships from so superior a force would have been considered as no inconsiderable victory a few years earlier; but Nelson had introduced a new era in our naval history; and the nation felt, respecting this action, as he had felt on a somewhat similar occasion. They regretted that Nelson, with his eleven ships, had not been in Sir Robert Calder's place; and their disappointment was generally and loudly expressed.

Frustrated as his own hopes had been, Nelson had yet the high satisfaction of knowing that his judgment had never been more conspicuously approved, and that he had rendered essential service to his country, by driving the enemy from those islands, where they expected there could be no force capable of opposing them. The West India merchants in London, as men whose interests were more immediately benefited, appointed a deputation to express their thanks for his great and judicious exertions. It was now his intention

to rest awhile from his labours, and recruit himself, after all his fatigues and cares, in the society of those whom he loved. All his stores were brought up from the *Victory*, and he found in his house at Merton the enjoyment which he had anticipated. Many days had not elapsed before Captain Blackwood, on his way to London with despatches, called on him at five in the morning. Nelson, who was already dressed, exclaimed, the moment he saw him: 'I am sure you bring me news of the French and Spanish fleets! I think I shall yet have to beat them!' They had refitted at Vigo, after the indecisive action with Sir Robert Calder; then proceeded to Ferrol, brought out the squadron from thence, and with it entered Cadiz in safety! 'Depend on it, Blackwood,' he repeatedly said, 'I shall yet give M. Villeneuve a drubbing.'

His services were as willingly accepted as they were offered; and Lord Barham, giving him the list of the navy, desired him to choose his own officers. 'Choose yourself, my lord,' was his reply: 'the same spirit actuates the whole profession; you cannot choose wrong.' Lord Barham then desired him to say what ships, and how many, he would wish in addition to the fleet which he was going to command, and said they should follow him as soon as each was ready. No appointment was ever more in unison with the feelings and judgment of the whole nation. They thought that the destruction of the combined fleets ought properly to be Nelson's work; that he, who had been

‘Half around the sea-girt ball,  
The hunter of the recreant Gaul,’ \*

ought to reap the spoils of the chase, which he had watched so long, and so perseveringly pursued.

Unremitting exertions were made to equip the ships which he had chosen, and especially to refit the *Victory*, which was once more to bear his flag. Before he left London, he called at his upholsterer's, where the coffin which Captain Hallowell had given him was deposited, and desired that his history might be engraven upon the lid, saying, it was highly probable he might want it on his return. He seemed, indeed, to have

\* Songs of Trafalgar.

been impressed with an expectation that he should fall in the battle. In a letter to his brother, written immediately after his return, he had said: 'We must not talk of Sir Robert Calder's battle. I might not have done so much with my small force. If I had fallen in with them, you might probably have been a lord before I wished; for I know they meant to make a dead set at the *Victory*.' The state of his feelings now was expressed, in his private journal, in these words: 'Friday night (Sept. 13th) at half-past ten, I drove from dear, dear Merton! where I left all which I hold dear in this world, to go to serve my king and country. May the great God, whom I adore, enable me to fulfil the expectations of my country! And, if it is His good pleasure that I should return, my thanks will never cease being offered up to the throne of His mercy. If it is His good providence to cut short my days upon earth, I bow with the greatest submission; relying that He will protect those so dear to me, whom I may leave behind! His will be done. Amen! Amen! Amen!'

Early on the following morning he reached Portsmouth; and, having despatched his business on shore, endeavoured to elude the populace by taking a bye-way to the beach; but a crowd collected in his train, pressing forward to obtain sight of his face: many were in tears, and many knelt down before him, and blessed him as he passed. England has had many heroes, but never one who so entirely possessed the love of his fellow-countrymen as Nelson. All men knew that his heart was as humane as it was fearless; that there was not in his nature the slightest alloy of selfishness or cupidity; but that, with perfect and entire devotion, he served his country with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his strength; and, therefore, they loved him as truly and as fervently as he loved England. They pressed upon the parapet, to gaze after him when his barge pushed off, and he was returning their cheers by waving his hat. The sentinels, who endeavoured to prevent them from trespassing upon this ground, were wedged among the crowd; and an officer, who, not very prudently upon such an occasion, ordered them to drive the people down with their bayonets, was compelled speedily to retreat; for the people would not be debarred from

gazing, till the last moment, upon the hero—the darling hero—of England !

He arrived off Cadiz on the 29th of September—his birthday. Fearing that, if the enemy knew his force, they might be deterred from venturing to sea, he kept out of sight of land, desired Collingwood to fire no salute, and hoist no colours ; and wrote to Gibraltar, to request that the force of the fleet might not be inserted there in the 'Gazette.' His reception in the Mediterranean fleet was as gratifying as the farewell of his countrymen at Portsmouth : the officers, who came on board to welcome him, forgot his rank as commander, in their joy at seeing him again. On the day of his arrival, Villeneuve received orders to put to sea the first opportunity. Villeneuve, however, hesitated, when he heard that Nelson had resumed the command. He called a council of war ; and their determination was, that it would not be expedient to leave Cadiz, unless they had reason to believe themselves stronger by one-third than the British force. In the public measures of this country secrecy is seldom practicable, and seldom attempted : here, however, by the precautions of Nelson, and the wise measures of the Admiralty, the enemy were for once kept in ignorance ; for, as the ships appointed to reinforce the Mediterranean fleet were despatched singly, each as soon as it was ready, their collected number was not stated in the newspapers, and their arrival was not known to the enemy. But the enemy knew that Admiral Louis, with six sail, had been detached for stores and water to Gibraltar. Accident also contributed to make the French admiral doubt whether Nelson himself had actually taken the command. An American, lately arrived from England, maintained that it was impossible—for he had seen him only a few days before in London ; and, at that time, there was no rumour of his going again to sea.

The station which Nelson had chosen was some fifty or sixty miles to the west of Cadiz, near Cape St Mary's. At this distance he hoped to decoy the enemy out, while he guarded against the danger of being caught with a westerly wind near Cadiz, and driven within the Straits. The blockade of the port was rigorously enforced, in hopes that

the combined fleet might be forced to sea by want. The Danish vessels, therefore, which were carrying provisions from the French ports in the bay, under the name of Danish property, to all the little ports from Ayamonte to Algeziras, from whence they were conveyed in coasting boats to Cadiz, were seized. Without this proper exertion of power, the blockade would have been rendered nugatory, by the advantage thus taken of the neutral flag. The supplies from France were thus effectually cut off. There was now every indication that the enemy would speedily venture out: officers and men were in the highest spirits at the prospect of giving them a decisive blow; such, indeed, as would put an end to all further contest upon the seas. Theatrical amusements were performed every evening in most of the ships: and 'God Save the King' was the hymn with which the sports concluded. 'I verily believe,' said Nelson, writing on the 6th of October, 'that the country will soon be put to some expense on my account; either a monument, or a new pension and honours; for I have not the smallest doubt but that a very few days, almost hours, will put us in battle. The success no man can insure; but for the fighting them, if they can be got at, I pledge myself. The sooner the better: I don't like to have these things upon my mind.'

At this time he was not without some cause of anxiety; he was in want of frigates—the eyes of the fleet, as he always called them: to the want of which the enemy before were indebted for their escape, and Bonaparte for his arrival in Egypt. He had only twenty-three ships—others were on the way—but they might come too late; and, though Nelson never doubted of victory, mere victory was not what he looked to, he wanted to annihilate the enemy's fleet. The Cartagena squadron might effect a junction with this fleet on the one side; and, on the other, it was to be expected that a similar attempt would be made by the French from Brest; in either case a formidable contingency to be apprehended by the blockading force. The Rochefort squadron did push out, and had nearly caught the *Agamemnon* and *l'Aimable* in their way to reinforce the British admiral. Yet Nelson at this time weakened his own fleet. He had the

unpleasant task to perform of sending home Sir Robert Calder, whose conduct was to be made the subject of a court-martial, in consequence of the general dissatisfaction which had been felt and expressed at his imperfect victory. Sir Robert Calder and Sir John Orde, Nelson believed to be the only two enemies whom he had ever had in his profession; and, from that sensitive delicacy which distinguished him, this made him the more scrupulously anxious to show every possible mark of respect and kindness to Sir Robert. He wished to detain him till after the expected action; when the services which he might perform, and the triumphant joy which would be excited, would leave nothing to be apprehended from an inquiry into the previous engagement. Sir Robert, however, whose situation was very painful, did not choose to delay a trial, from the result of which he confidently expected a complete justification: and Nelson, instead of sending him home in a frigate, insisted on his returning in his own ninety-gun ship; ill as such a ship could at that time be spared. Nothing could be more honourable than the feeling by which Nelson was influenced; but, at such a crisis, it ought not to have been indulged.

On the 9th, Nelson sent Collingwood what he called, in his diary, the Nelson-touch. 'I send you,' said he, 'my plan of attack, as far as a man dare venture to guess at the very uncertain position the enemy may be found in: but it is to place you perfectly at ease respecting my intentions, and to give full scope to your judgment for carrying them into effect. We can, my dear Coll., have no little jealousies. We have only one great object in view, that of annihilating our enemies, and getting a glorious peace for our country. No man has more confidence in another than I have in you; and no man will render your services more justice than your very old friend—Nelson and Bronte.' The order of sailing was to be the order of battle; the fleet in two lines, with an advanced squadron of eight of the fastest-sailing two-deckers. The second in command, having the entire direction of his line, was to break through the enemy, about the twelfth ship from their rear: he would lead through the centre, and the advanced squadron was to cut off three or four ahead.

of the centre. This plan was to be adapted to the strength of the enemy, so that they should always be one-fourth superior to those whom they cut off. Nelson said, 'That his admirals and captains, knowing his precise object to be that of a close and decisive action, would supply any deficiency of signals, and act accordingly. In case signals cannot be seen or clearly understood, no captain can do wrong if he places his ship alongside that of an enemy.' One of the last orders of this admirable man was, that the name and family of every officer, seaman, and marine, who might be killed or wounded in action, should be, as soon as possible, returned to him, in order to be transmitted to the chairman of the patriotic fund, that the case might be taken into consideration, for the benefit of the sufferer or his family.

About half-past nine in the morning of the 19th, the *Mars*, being the nearest to the fleet of the ships which formed the line of communication with the frigates in-shore, repeated the signal, that the enemy were coming out of port. The wind was at this time very light, with partial breezes, mostly from the S.S.W. Nelson ordered the signal to be made for a chase in the south-east quarter. About two, the repeating-ships announced that the enemy were at sea. All night the British fleet continued under all sail, steering to the south-east. At daybreak they were in the entrance of the Straits, but the enemy were not in sight. About seven, one of the frigates made signal that the enemy were bearing north. Upon this the *Victory* hove-to; and shortly afterwards Nelson made sail again to the northward. In the afternoon the wind blew fresh from the southwest, and the English began to fear that the foe might be forced to return to port. A little before sunset, however, Blackwood, in the *Euryalus*, telegraphed that they appeared determined to go to the westward. 'And that,' said the admiral in his diary, 'they shall not do, if it is in the power of Nelson and Bronte to prevent them.' Nelson had signified to Blackwood that he depended upon him to keep sight of the enemy. 'They were observed so well, that all their motions were made known to him; and, as they wore twice, he inferred that they were aiming to keep the port of Cadiz open, and would retreat there as soon as

they saw the British fleet; for this reason he was very careful not to approach near enough to be seen by them during the night. At daybreak the combined fleets were distinctly seen from the *Victory's* deck, formed in a close line of battle ahead, on the starboard tack, about twelve miles to leeward, and standing to the south. Our fleet consisted of twenty-seven sail of the line and four frigates; theirs of thirty-three and seven large frigates. Their superiority was greater in size and weight of metal than in numbers. They had four thousand troops on board; and the best riflemen who could be procured, many of them Tyrolese, were dispersed through the ships. Little did the Tyrolese, and little did the Spaniards, at that day, imagine what horrors the wicked tyrant whom they served was preparing for their country.

Soon after daylight Nelson came upon deck. The 21st of October was a festival in his family, because on that day his uncle, Captain Suckling, in the *Dreadnought*, with two other line-of-battle ships, had beaten off a French squadron of four sail of the line and three frigates. Nelson, with that sort of superstition from which few persons are entirely exempt, had more than once expressed his persuasion that this was to be the day of his battle also; and he was well pleased at seeing his prediction about to be verified. The wind was now from the west, light breezes, with a long heavy swell. Signal was made to bear down upon the enemy in two lines; and the fleet set all sail. Collingwood, in the *Royal Sovereign*, led the lee-line of thirteen ships; the *Victory* led the weather-line of fourteen. Having seen that all was as it should be, Nelson retired to his cabin, and wrote the following prayer:—

‘ May the great God, whom I worship, grant to my country, and for the benefit of Europe in general, a great and glorious victory; and may no misconduct in any one tarnish it! and may humanity after victory be the predominant feature in the British fleet! For myself individually I commit my life to Him that made me; and may His blessing alight on my endeavours for serving my country faithfully! To Him I resign myself, and the just cause which is entrusted to me to defend. Amen, Amen, Amen.’

Blackwood went on board the *Victory* about six. He found

him in good spirits, but very calm ; not in that exhilaration which he had felt upon entering into battle at Aboukir and Copenhagen: he knew that his own life would be particularly aimed at, and seems to have looked for death with almost as sure an expectation as for victory. His whole attention was fixed upon the enemy. They tacked to the northward, and formed their line on the larboard tack ; thus bringing the shoals of Trafalgar and St Pedro under the lee of the British, and keeping the port of Cadiz open for themselves. This was judiciously done ; and Nelson, aware of all the advantages which it gave them, made signal to prepare to anchor.

Villeneuve was a skilful seaman ; worthy of serving a better master, and a better cause. His plan of defence was as well conceived, and as original, as the plan of attack. He formed the fleet in a double line ; every alternate ship being about a cable's length to windward of her second ahead and astern. Nelson, certain of a triumphant issue to the day, asked Blackwood what he should consider as a victory. That officer answered, that, considering the handsome way in which battle was offered by the enemy, their apparent determination for a fair trial of strength, and the situation of the land, he thought it would be a glorious result if fourteen were captured. He replied : 'I shall not be satisfied with less than twenty.' Soon afterwards he asked him if he did not think there was a signal wanting. Captain Blackwood made answer that he thought the whole fleet seemed very clearly to understand what they were about. These words were scarcely spoken before that signal was made, which will be remembered as long as the language, or even the memory, of England shall endure—Nelson's last signal :—' ENGLAND EXPECTS EVERY MAN TO DO HIS DUTY ! ' It was received throughout the fleet with a shout of answering acclamation, made sublime by the spirit which it breathed, and the feeling which it expressed. 'Now,' said Lord Nelson, 'I can do no more. We must trust to the great Disposer of all events, and the justice of our cause. I thank God for this great opportunity of doing my duty.'

He wore that day, as usual, his admiral's frock-coat, bearing on the left breast four stars, of the different orders with which

he was invested. Ornaments which rendered him so conspicuous a mark for the enemy were beheld with ominous apprehensions by his officers. It was known that there were riflemen on board the French ships; and it could not be doubted but that his life would be particularly aimed at. They communicated their fears to each other; and the surgeon, Mr Beatty, spoke to the chaplain, Dr Scott, and to Mr Scott, the public secretary, desiring that some person would entreat him to change his dress, or cover the stars; but they knew that such a request would highly displease him. 'In honour I gained them,' he had said, when such a thing had been hinted to him formerly, 'and in honour I will die with them.'

The French admiral, from the *Bucentaure*, beheld the new manner in which his enemy was advancing—Nelson and Collingwood each leading his line; and pointing them out to his officers, he is said to have exclaimed, that such conduct could not fail to be successful. Yet Villeneuve had made his own dispositions with the utmost skill, and the fleets under his command waited for the attack with perfect coolness. Ten minutes before twelve they opened their fire. Eight or nine of the ships immediately ahead of the *Victory*, and across her bows, fired single guns at her, to ascertain whether she was yet within their range. As soon as Nelson perceived that their shot passed over him, he desired Blackwood, and Captain Prowse, of the *Sirius*, to repair to their respective frigates; and, on their way, to tell all the captains of the line-of-battle ships that he depended on their exertions; and that, if by the prescribed mode of attack they found it impracticable to get into action immediately, they might adopt whatever they thought best, provided it led them quickly and closely alongside an enemy. As they were standing on the front poop, Blackwood took him by the hand, saying, he hoped soon to return, and find him in possession of twenty prizes. He replied, 'God bless you, Blackwood; I shall never see you again!'

Nelson's column was steered about two points more to the north than Collingwood's, in order to cut off the enemy's escape into Cadiz: the lee-line, therefore, was first engaged.

'See,' cried Nelson, pointing to the *Royal Sovereign*, as she steered right for the centre of the enemy's line, cut through it astern of the *Santa Anna*, three-decker, and engaged her at the muzzle of her guns on the starboard side; 'see how that noble fellow, Collingwood, carries his ship into action!' Collingwood, delighted at being first in the heat of the fire, and knowing the feelings of his commander and old friend, turned to his captain, and exclaimed: 'Rotherham, what would Nelson give to be here?' Both these brave officers, perhaps, at this moment, thought of Nelson with gratitude, for a circumstance which had occurred on the preceding day. Admiral Collingwood, with some of the captains, having gone on board the *Victory* to receive instructions, Nelson inquired of him where his captain was; and was told, in reply, that they were not upon good terms with each other. 'Terms!' said Nelson, 'good terms with each other!' Immediately he sent a boat for Captain Rotherham; led him, as soon as he arrived, to Collingwood, and saying: 'Look; yonder are the enemy!' bade them shake hands like Englishmen.

The enemy continued to fire a gun at a time at the *Victory*, till they saw that a shot had passed through her main-top-gallant sail; then they opened their broadsides, aiming chiefly at her rigging, in the hope of disabling her before she could close with them. Nelson, as usual, had hoisted several flags, lest one should be shot away. The enemy showed no colours till late in the action, when they began to feel the necessity of having them to strike. For this reason, the *Santissima Trinidad*, Nelson's old acquaintance, as he used to call her, was distinguishable only by her four decks; and to the bow of this opponent he ordered the *Victory* to be steered. Meantime, an incessant raking fire was kept up upon the *Victory*. The admiral's secretary was one of the first who fell; he was killed by a cannon-shot while conversing with Hardy. Captain Adair, of the marines, with the help of a sailor, endeavoured to remove the body from Nelson's sight, who had a great regard for Mr Scott; but he anxiously asked, 'Is that poor Scott that's gone?' and being informed that it was indeed so, exclaimed, 'Poor fellow!' Presently, a double-headed shot struck a party of marines, who were drawn up on the poop,

and killed eight of them: upon which Nelson immediately desired Captain Adair to disperse his men round the ship, that they might not suffer so much from being together. A few minutes afterwards a shot struck the fore-brace bits on the quarter-deck, and passed between Nelson and Hardy, a splinter from the bit tearing off Hardy's buckle, and bruising his foot. Both stopped, and looked anxiously at each other: each supposed the other to be wounded. Nelson then smiled, and said: 'This is too warm work, Hardy, to last long.'

The *Victory* had not yet returned a single gun; fifty of her men had been by this time killed or wounded, and her main-top-mast with all her studding-sails and their booms shot away. Nelson declared that, in all his battles, he had seen nothing which surpassed the cool courage of his crew on this occasion. At four minutes after twelve, she opened her fire from both sides of her deck. It was not possible to break the enemy's line without running on board one of their ships; Hardy informed him of this, and asked him which he would prefer. Nelson replied: 'Take your choice, Hardy; it does not signify much.' The master was ordered to put the helm to port, and the *Victory* ran on board the *Redoubtable*, just as her tiller-ropes were shot away. The French ship received her with a broadside; then instantly let down her lower-deck ports, for fear of being boarded through them, and never afterwards fired a great gun during the action. Her tops, like those of all the enemy's ships, were filled with riflemen. Nelson never placed musketry in his tops: he had a strong dislike to the practice: not merely because it endangers setting fire to the sails, but also because it is a murderous sort of warfare, by which individuals may suffer, and a commander now and then be picked off, but which never can decide the fate of a general engagement.

Captain Harvey, in the *Temeraire*, fell on board the *Redoubtable* on the other side. Another enemy was in like manner on board the *Temeraire*, so that these four ships formed as compact a tier as if they had been moored together, their heads lying all the same way. The lieutenants of the *Victory*, seeing this, depressed their guns of the middle and lower decks, and fired with a diminished charge, lest the shot

should pass through and injure the *Temeraire*. And because there was danger that the *Redoubtable* might take fire from the lower-deck guns, the muzzles of which touched her side when they were run out, the fireman of each gun stood ready with a bucket of water; which, as soon as the gun was discharged, he dashed into the hole made by the shot. An incessant fire was kept up from the *Victory* from both sides; her larboard guns playing upon the *Bucentaure*, and the huge *Santissima Trinidad*.

It had been part of Nelson's prayer, that the British fleet might be distinguished by humanity in the victory he expected. Setting an example himself, he twice gave orders to cease firing upon the *Redoubtable*, supposing that she had struck, because her great guns were silent; for, as she carried no flag, there was no means of instantly ascertaining the fact. From this ship, which he had thus twice spared, he received his death. A ball fired from her mizen-top, which, in the then situation of the two vessels, was not more than fifteen yards from that part of the deck where he was standing, struck the epaulette on his left shoulder, about a quarter after one, just in the heat of action. He fell upon his face, on the spot which was covered with his poor secretary's blood. Hardy, who was a few steps from him, turning round, saw three men raising him up. 'They have done for me at last, Hardy!' said he. 'I hope not!' cried Hardy. 'Yes,' he replied; 'my back-bone is shot through!' Yet even now, not for a moment losing his presence of mind, he observed, as they were carrying him down the ladder, that the tiller-ropes, which had been shot away, were not yet replaced, and ordered that new ones should be rove immediately. Then, that he might not be seen by the crew, he took out his handkerchief, and covered his face and his stars. Had he but concealed these badges of honour from the enemy, England, perhaps, would not have had cause to receive with sorrow the news of the battle of Trafalgar. The cockpit was crowded with wounded and dying men; over whose bodies he was with some difficulty conveyed, and laid upon a pallet in the midshipmen's berth. It was soon perceived, upon examination, that the wound was mortal. This, however, was con-

sealed from all except Captain Hardy, the chaplain, and the medical attendants. He himself being certain, from the sensation in his back, and the gush of blood he felt momently within his breast, that no human care could avail him, insisted that the surgeon should leave him, and attend to those to whom he might be useful. 'For,' said he, 'you can do nothing for me.' All that could be done was to fan him with paper, and frequently to give him lemonade to alleviate his intense thirst. He was in great pain, and expressed much anxiety for the event of the action, which now began to declare itself. As often as a ship struck, the crew of the *Victory* hurrahed; and at every hurrah, a visible expression of joy gleamed in the eyes, and marked the countenance of the dying hero. But he became impatient to see Captain Hardy; and as that officer, though often sent for, could not leave the deck, Nelson feared that some fatal cause prevented him, and repeatedly cried: 'Will no one bring Hardy to me? He must be killed! He is surely dead!' An hour and ten minutes elapsed from the time when Nelson received his wound, before Hardy could come to him. They shook hands in silence; Hardy in vain struggling to suppress the feelings of that most painful and yet sublimest moment. 'Well, Hardy,' said Nelson, 'how goes the day with us?' 'Very well,' replied Hardy; 'ten ships have struck, but five of the van have tacked, and show an intention to bear down upon the *Victory*. I have called two or three of our fresh ships round, and have no doubt of giving them a drubbing.' 'I hope,' said Nelson, 'none of our ships have struck?' Hardy answered, 'There was no fear of that.' Then, and not till then, Nelson spoke of himself. 'I am a dead man, Hardy,' said he: 'I am going fast; it will be all over with me soon.' Hardy observed, that he hoped Mr Beatty could yet hold out some prospect of life. 'Oh no!' he replied; 'it is impossible; my back is shot through. Beatty will tell you so.' Captain Hardy then, once more, shook hands with him; and with a heart almost bursting, hastened upon deck.

By this time all feeling below the breast was gone; and Nelson, having made the surgeon ascertain this, said to him: 'You know I am gone. I know it. I feel something rising

in my breast' (putting his hand on his left side) 'which tells me so.' And upon Beatty's inquiring whether his pain was very great? he replied, 'So great, that he wished he was dead. Yet,' said he, in a lower tone, 'one would like to live a little longer too!' Captain Hardy, some fifty minutes after he had left the cockpit, returned, and again taking the hand of his dying friend and commander, congratulated him on having gained a complete victory. How many of the enemy were taken he did not know, as it was impossible to perceive them distinctly, but fourteen or fifteen at least. 'That's well!' cried Nelson; 'but I bargained for twenty.' And then, in a stronger voice, he said: 'Anchor, Hardy; anchor.' Hardy, upon this, hinted that Admiral Collingwood would take upon himself the direction of affairs. 'Not while I live, Hardy,' said the dying Nelson, ineffectually endeavouring to raise himself from the bed; 'do you anchor.' His previous order for preparing to anchor had shown how clearly he foresaw the necessity of this. Presently, calling Hardy back, he said to him, in a low voice: 'Don't throw me overboard; and he desired that he might be buried by his parents, unless it should please the king to order otherwise. 'Kiss me, Hardy,' said he. Hardy knelt down and kissed his cheek; and Nelson said: 'Now I am satisfied. Thank God, I have done my duty!' Hardy stood over him in silence for a moment or two, then knelt again, and kissed his forehead. 'Who is that?' said Nelson; and being informed, he replied: 'God bless you, Hardy!' And Hardy then left him, for ever.

Nelson now desired to be turned upon his right side, and said: 'I wish I had not left the deck; for I shall soon be gone.' Death was, indeed, rapidly approaching. He said to the chaplain: 'Doctor, I have *not* been a *great* sinner.' His articulation now became difficult; but he was distinctly heard to say: 'Thank God, I have done my duty!' These words he repeatedly pronounced; and they were the last words which he uttered. He expired at thirty minutes after four, three hours and a quarter after he had received his wound.

Within a quarter of an hour after Nelson was wounded, above fifty of the *Victory*'s men fell by the enemy's musketry.

They, however, on their part, were not idle ; and it was not long before there were only two Frenchmen left alive in the mizen-top of the *Redoubtable*. One of them was the man who had given the fatal wound ; he did not live to boast of what he had done. An old quarter-master had seen him fire ; and easily recognized him, because he wore a glazed cocked-hat and a white frock. This quarter-master and two midshipmen, Mr Collingwood and Mr Pollard, were the only persons left in the *Victory's* poop ; the two midshipmen kept firing at the top, and he supplied them with cartridges. One of the Frenchmen, attempting to make his escape down the rigging, was shot by Mr Pollard, and fell on the poop. But the old quarter-master, as he cried out, 'That's he, that's he !' and pointed at the other, who was coming forward to fire again, received a shot in his mouth, and fell dead. Both the midshipmen then fired at the same time, and the fellow dropped in the top. When they took possession of the prize, they went into the mizen-top, and found him dead ; with one ball through his head, and another through his breast.

The *Redoubtable* struck within twenty minutes after the fatal shot had been fired from her. During that time she had been twice on fire ; in her forechains, and in her forecastle. The French, as they had done in other battles, made use in this of fire-halls, and other combustibles ; implements of destruction which other nations, from a sense of honour and humanity, have laid aside ; which add\* to the sufferings of the wounded, without determining the issue of the combat ; which none but the cruel would employ ; and which never can be successful against the brave. Once they succeeded in setting fire, from the *Redoubtable*, to some ropes and canvas on the *Victory's* booms. The cry ran through the ship, and reached the cockpit ; but even this dreadful cry produced no confusion ; the men displayed that perfect self-possession in danger by which English seamen are characterised ; they extinguished the flames on board their own ship, and then hastened to extinguish them in the enemy, by throwing buckets of water from the gangway. When the *Redoubtable* had struck, it was not practicable to board her from the *Victory*, for, though the two ships touched, the upper works

of both fell in so much that there was a great space between their gangways; and she could not be boarded from the lower or middle decks, because her ports were down. Some of our men went to Lieutenant Quilliam, and offered to swim under her bows, and get up there; but it was thought unfit to hazard brave lives in this manner.

What our men would have done from gallantry, some of the crew of the *Santissima Trinidad* did to save themselves. Unable to stand the tremendous fire of the *Victory*, whose larboard guns played against this great four-decker, and not knowing how else to escape them, nor where else to betake themselves for protection, many of them leapt overboard, and swam to the *Victory*, and were actually helped up her sides by the English during the action. The Spaniards began the battle with less vivacity than their unworthy allies, but continued it with greater firmness. The *Argonauta* and *Bahama* were defended till they had each lost about four hundred men; the *San Juan Nepomuceno* lost three hundred and fifty. Often as the superiority of British courage has been proved against France upon the seas, it was never more conspicuous than in this decisive conflict. Five of our ships were engaged muzzle to muzzle with five of the French. In all five the Frenchmen lowered their lower-deck ports, and deserted their guns; while our men continued deliberately to load and fire, till they had made the victory secure.

Once, amidst his sufferings, Nelson had expressed a wish that he were dead; but immediately the spirit subdued the pains of death, and he wished to live a little longer; doubtless that he might hear the completion of the victory which he had seen so gloriously begun. That consolation, that joy, that triumph, was afforded him. He lived to know that the victory was decisive; and the last guns which were fired at the flying enemy were heard a minute or two before he expired. The ships which were thus flying were four of the enemy's van, all French, under Rear-Admiral Dumanoir. They had borne no part in the action; and now, when they were seeking safety in flight, they fired not only into the *Victory* and *Royal Sovereign* as they passed, but poured their broadsides into the Spanish captured ships; and they were seen to

back their top-sails, for the purpose of firing with more precision. The indignation of the Spaniards at this detestable cruelty from their allies, for whom they had fought so bravely, and so profusely bled, may well be conceived. It was such, that when, two days after the action, seven of the ships which had escaped into Cadiz came out, in hopes of retaking some of the disabled prizes, the prisoners in the *Argonauta*, in a body, offered their services to the British prize-master, to man the guns against any of the French ships: saying, that if a Spanish ship came alongside they would quietly go below; but they requested that they might be allowed to fight the French, in resentment for the murderous usage which they had suffered at their hands. Such was their earnestness, and such the implicit confidence which could be placed in Spanish honour, that the offer was accepted; and they were actually stationed at the lower-deck guns. Dumanoir and his squadron were not more fortunate than the fleet from whose destruction they fled; they fell in with Sir Richard Strachan, who was cruising for the Rochefort squadron, and were all taken.

The total British loss in the battle of Trafalgar amounted to 1587. Twenty of the enemy struck:—unhappily the fleet did not anchor, as Nelson, almost with his dying breath, had enjoined;—a gale came on from the south-west; some of the prizes went down, some went on shore; one effected its escape into Cadiz; others were destroyed; four only were saved, and those by the greatest exertions. The wounded Spaniards were sent ashore, an assurance being given that they should not serve till regularly exchanged; and the Spaniards, with a generous feeling which would not, perhaps, have been found in any other people, offered the use of their hospitals for our wounded, pledging the honour of Spain that they should be carefully attended there. When the storm, after the action, drove some of the prizes upon the coast, they declared that the English, who were thus thrown into their hands, should not be considered as prisoners of war; and the Spanish soldiers gave up their own beds to their shipwrecked enemies. The Spanish Vice-admiral, Alva, died of his wounds. Villeneuve was sent to England, and permitted to

return to France. The French government say that he destroyed himself on the way to Paris, dreading the consequences of a court-martial: but there is every reason to believe that the tyrant, who never acknowledged the loss of the battle of Trafalgar, added Villeneuve to the numerous victims of his murderous policy.

It is almost superfluous to add, that all the honours which a grateful country could bestow were heaped upon the memory of Nelson. His brother was made an earl, with a grant of £6000 a-year; £10,000 were voted to each of his sisters; and £100,000 for the purchase of an estate. A public funeral was decreed, and a public monument. Statues and monuments also were voted by most of our principal cities. The leaden coffin in which he was brought home, was cut in pieces, which were distributed as relics of Saint Nelson—so the gunner of the *Victory* called them: and when, at his interment, his flag was about to be lowered into the grave, the sailors, who assisted at the ceremony, with one accord rent it in pieces, that each might preserve a fragment while he lived.

The death of Nelson was felt in England as something more than a public calamity: men started at the intelligence and turned pale; as if they had heard of the loss of a dear friend. An object of our admiration and affection, of our pride and of our hopes, was suddenly taken from us; and it seemed as if we had never, till then, known how deeply we loved and reverenced him. What the country had lost in its great naval hero—the greatest of our own and of all former times—was scarcely taken into the account of grief. So perfectly, indeed, had he performed his part, that the maritime war, after the battle of Trafalgar, was considered at an end: the fleets of the enemy were not merely defeated, but destroyed: new navies must be built, and a new race of seamen reared for them, before the possibility of their invading our shores could again be contemplated. It was not, therefore, from any selfish reflection upon the magnitude of our loss that we mourned for him: the general sorrow was of a higher character. The people of England grieved that funeral ceremonies, and public monuments, and posthumous rewards,

were all which they could now bestow upon him whom the king, the legislature, and the nation would have alike delighted to honour; whom every tongue would have blessed; whose presence in every village through which he might have passed would have wakened the church-bells, have given school-boys a holiday, have drawn children from their sports to gaze upon him, and 'old men from the chimney corner' to look upon Nelson ere they died. The victory of Trafalgar was celebrated, indeed, with the usual forms of rejoicing, but they were without joy; for such already was the glory of the British navy, through Nelson's surpassing genius, that it scarcely seemed to receive any addition from the most signal victory that ever was achieved upon the seas: and the destruction of this mighty fleet, by which all the maritime schemes of France were totally frustrated, hardly appeared to add to our security or strength; for, while Nelson was living to watch the combined squadrons of the enemy, we felt ourselves as secure as now, when they were no longer in existence.

There was reason to suppose, from the appearances upon opening the body, that, in the course of nature, he might have attained, like his father, to a good old age. Yet he cannot be said to have fallen prematurely whose work was done; nor ought he to be lamented, who died so full of honours, and at the height of human fame. The most triumphant death is that of the martyr; the most awful that of the martyred patriot; the most splendid that of the hero in the hour of victory; and if the chariot and the horses of fire had been vouchsafed for Nelson's translation, he could scarcely have departed in a brighter blaze of glory. He has left us, not indeed his mantle of inspiration, but a name and an example, which are at this hour inspiring thousands of the youth of England,—a name which is our pride, and an example which will continue to be our shield and our strength.

THE END.

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